METHOD IN SOUL-WINNING

MABIE

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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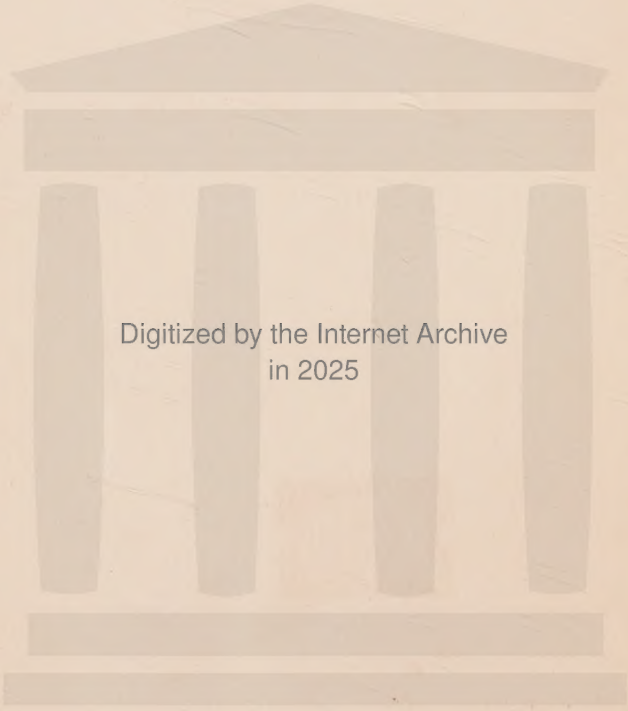
METHOD IN SOUL-WINNING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Method in Soul-Winning

On Home and Foreign Fields

By HENRY C. MABIE, D. D.,
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Boston, Mass.

He that is wise winneth souls.—*Prov. 11 : 30.*

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To All Winners of Souls

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PREFACE

THE writer of the following pages, while yet in student days, was singularly led, largely through the influence of Dwight L. Moody and some of his associate workers in Chicago, into active efforts for souls, and was blessed in seeing many brought to the acceptance of Christ.

Later when he entered the ministry and assumed different pastorates, east and west, much more marked blessing attended his labours of an evangelistic sort. An important spiritual crisis through which he passed while pastor in Indianapolis, in 1884, led him to see with new clearness that faith primarily involves a decisive act of the will in obedience to some present measure of spiritual light. This rather than theoretic belief of the truth as a system of intellectual propositions, is the chief element in that "belief of the heart" which is "unto righteousness." It is also the only principle on which any Christian however orthodox can grow in grace, and have power to help others into light. A certain measure of theoretic belief is, of course, always implied in an act of faith ; and may usually, in Christian lands, be taken for granted.

Practically, however, what others need from us, is to be "put on the clue" to a personal realization of Christ within themselves. This, the Holy Spirit, always and everywhere, waits and yearns to work in the willing heart.

In 1890, the writer as secretary of the foreign mission society of his denomination, was commissioned to visit

the mission fields of Asia. On that tour he had much opportunity to test, among the heathen, the value and practicality of his conceptions in dealing savingly with souls. Interviews with many inquirers in the various lands visited, and frequent conferences with experienced missionaries then and since, have but confirmed him in the validity of the conclusions herein recorded. The great moment of the subject is sufficient apology for contributing in the way of testimony what one may, towards the solution of a question of ever growing interest, namely, how successfully to lead men to Christ.

In the course of the years of varied experience in evangelical work, a good many striking instances of conversion, illustrating the postulates laid down in the following chapters, have come under the writer's notice. As he has related from time to time, the accounts of how some of these souls were started in the new life, he has been asked to commit the narratives to print, in the hope that they might shed their light afar.

In the chapters which ensue, various incidents showing steps whereby particular individuals were "put on the clue" Christward, are given, in the hope that they may afford helpful hints to some perplexed workers on the home field; to students, Sunday-school teachers, leaders of young people's societies, and ministers, and to young missionaries about commencing their work among pagan peoples. To this end the special aid of the Holy Spirit, who alone can give that "understanding" and skill which shall "turn the many to righteousness," is invoked.

H. C. M.

Boston, January 10, 1906.

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Method in Soul-Winning

I

PRESUPPOSITIONS IN THE SOUL-WINNER

And do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren.—*Luke.* 22 : 32.

WINNING souls is not a perfunctory undertaking. The soul-winner is not a recruiting sergeant, nor a mere zealot gaining adherents to a sect. He is rather one who seeks to add "to the Lord" as men were "added" at Pentecost, or as expressed in Hosea's word "betrothed" unto the Lord forever.[1] The achievement sought presupposes much in the winner; that he himself is the possessor of assured, personal blessing from God. If one who would win souls is not thus consciously in touch with God, it would be well to closet himself with Him long enough to find out what obstruction in heart or life prevents communion: to give to it if necessary a prolonged season of heart-searching, until the vision of God comes clear and pronounced. We dare not say that all men are called to be conspicuously evangelists; certainly not that a given form of emotional experience as such is to be expected by all. God has His own original

[1] Hosea 2 : 19.

way of self-communication to every man: there is doubtless a sovereign element in it. The bestowal of particular powers upon certain workmen, for example, Whitfield, Wesley, Spurgeon and Finney, are such as all may not claim. Temperamental gifts determine much. Nevertheless, I think it may be truly said, other things being equal, that real evangelistic power can coexist only with a certain clearness of vision of God's face, and as some specific divine secret is therewith imparted.

It is a well known fact that Mr. Moody, before going to England on his great evangelistic campaigns in 1871–5, experienced a peculiar unveiling of the love of God, although it was a matter of which he rarely spoke. He had been a remarkably successful evangelist on many lines previously. At the time referred to, however, he had been moved to unwonted prayerfulness, in which others joined him, that he might be filled with the Spirit. Under these deep exercises of mind, while in New York, one day there broke upon him such a realization of the Divine Love that it well-nigh overpowered him, so that he cried out: "O Lord, stay Thy hand."

This realization was the earnest, as all the world knows, of the profoundest spiritual awakenings in England and America witnessed within the past century.

When later Mr. Moody returned to this country

and entered on his great meetings in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York and Boston, even those who had previously known him best instantly perceived the revolution which had occurred in him, and the new power with which he wrought.

Evan Roberts thus speaks of the spiritual exercises which preceded his own recent extraordinary testimony in Wales:

"For thirteen years I had prayed for the Spirit, and this is the way I was led to pray. William Davies, the deacon, said one night in the society: 'Remember to be faithful. What if the Spirit descended and you were absent? Remember Thomas! What a loss he had.'

"I said then to myself: 'I will have the spirit'; and through every kind of weather and in spite of all difficulties, I went to the meetings. Many times, on seeing other boys with the boats on the tide, I was tempted to turn back and join them. But, no. I said to myself: 'Remember your resolve,' and on I went. . . . I went faithfully to the meetings for prayer throughout the ten or eleven years I prayed for a revival. I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals. It was the Spirit that moved me thus to think.

"One Friday night in 1904, when praying by my bedside before retiring, I was taken up to a great expanse—without time or space. It was communion

with God. Before this, a far-off God I had. I was now taken up into the divine fellowship for continuous hours. What it was I cannot tell, except that it was divine,—too divine to talk about."

When Mr. Roberts afterwards went to school at New Castle-Emlyn, he was so afraid he would lose the communion with God that at first he set apart a half hour daily for prayer. Then, this not sufficing, he gave successive days to it and many nights besides. At length, he felt impelled to leave the school and went to attend certain meetings held under the Church Federation Evangelists, led by one Seth Joshua. At a certain morning meeting, Mr. Joshua prayed with great earnestness. In one of his petitions he besought that the Lord would "bend us." The Spirit seemed to say to Roberts: "That's what you need, to be bent." He was deeply exercised about not being completely bent to God's will for him. Finally, as he says: "I felt a living force coming into my bosom. . . . This grew and grew, and I was almost bursting. . . . My bosom was boiling. What boiled in me was that verse: 'God commending His love.' I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me; the tears and perspiration flowed freely. I thought blood was gushing forth." Certain friends approached to wipe his face. Meanwhile he was crying out, "O Lord, bend me! Bend me!" Then suddenly the glory

broke. It was Roberts's Peniel after the night of resistance of the Angel-Wrestler at the Jabbok.

Mr. Roberts adds: "After I was bent, a wave of peace came over me, and the audience sang, 'I hear Thy welcome voice.' And as they sang I thought about the bending at the Judgment Day, and I was filled with compassion for those that would have to bend on that day, and I wept.

"Henceforth, the salvation of souls became the burden of my heart. From that time I was on fire with a desire to go through all Wales, and if it were possible, I was willing to pay God for the privilege of going."

But lest any should say, these experiences are for altogether uncommon persons, let the writer, an ordinary Christian worker, add his modest testimony of what came to him in boyhood, long before he had any purpose to become a minister.

During my first term in college, being brought into contact with more forceful types of Christian associates than I had previously known, and, suffering not a little from homesickness, I began to feel a deep longing for a more conscious relation to Christ. I sought it for many weeks, but blindly and unavailingly. One night, however, while assembled with a few companions at the regular students' prayer-meeting—a meeting which I had refused to give up, to hear a lecture by Miss Anna Dickinson, then electri-

fying the country on themes connected with the Civil War—the consuming longing which had possessed my soul was rewarded by a new vision of the Divine One, altogether unknown before.

There had been much concentration of thought on the theme of the meeting—"Christ in Gethsemane," and we were upon our knees in prayer when suddenly there shone out to me at least a presence as of the unveiled and risen Lord. This entirely supernatural glory seemed to suffuse the place with resurrection light, and all the other persons in the room also were spiritually affected in a way altogether uncommon. Indeed what occurred that night in that little upper room is entirely beyond human telling. Probably the form of it was determined in part by mental suggestion, by psychic influence, by various second causes, kindling the imagination at such a time. Be this as it may, the reality of this theophany I can no more doubt than I could deny my own identity. It was not conversion, for this had occurred at least four years previously. At all events, from the time of which I speak the whole character, current and outlook of my life changed. The Scriptures lighted up, Christian joy displaced depression, passion for souls ensued, courage triumphed over fear in public religious exercises. Other people also recognized the realness of the change, and the whole providential

course of life since has corroborated the divineness of the vision of that night.

About that time the college was broken up through the occurrence of a case of smallpox among the students, and I went home. Calling on my pastor the next morning and reporting the great change which had occurred in me, with quick sympathy he replied, "The Lord has sent you home in this frame just at the time when we most need you. The state of religion is low among us: the young people's meeting has died out. you are the means to revive it." Then taking a note-book and pencil he wrote down the names of about two hundred young people in the town, and putting it in my hands said, "There, go and bring them in. Lead them to Christ. That's your work."

Encouraged by such a proposal, I set about it. The first visit I made was characterized by a soul-contest of hours resulting in the conversion of a young woman. That led to another and that to others until an entire Bible class of influential young persons surrendered to Christ. From that the work so spread that ere the summer was over nearly all the persons named in my note-book were converted and added to the several churches of the town. Moreover, all this work was marked by the almost total absence of special preaching, the testimony of new converts to new inquirers instead, seeming to suffice.

When I returned to college in the following autumn, I was in the afterglow of the realization of that revival and my Christian fellow students were alert to hear accounts of it, and to ascertain its secret. On occasions I was invited to other towns and similar revivals occurred. In one of these towns over sixty converts came out in a few days, while within the college itself the revival spirit, now being alive in many hearts, continued for years following, with many striking conversions, some being so smitten with conviction that unable to sleep they sought their Christian associates in the night hours begging for prayer.

In relating the above reconstructive crisis in one life, I do not imply that such an experience is exceptional. Probably it is only typical of what occurs sooner or later in the lives of most ministers and missionaries, and such others as ever become effective winners of souls. Such experiences are occurring constantly in connection with College Y. M. C. A. and Student Volunteer work. The Motts and Speers, the Brockmans and Gaileys, the Briggses and Sherwood Eddys, aye, and the Hugh Beavers and Horace Pitkins, of blessed memory—all stand for lives marked by just such crises and changes under the wondrous grace of God. The place of some such realization at least in principle, a special vision of Christ,—as antecedent to power to win others, cannot be gainsaid.

Said Jesus to Peter, "And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter,—a rock—and upon this rock—this solid substratum, product of My Spirit—I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound—lit. 'have been bound'—in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed—'have been loosed'—in heaven."[1] In other words, the servant of Christ that has been brought to a keener discernment of the Divine One will have been so brought *en rapport* with the very sovereign purpose of God, as that the keys of the kingdom of heaven may be said to have been given him, not as in lieu of Christ, but as so completely subject to Him as that Christ can work through him.

"When thou hast turned again—establish thy brethren."[2] Of course, no two persons ever have a divine manifestation to them in the same form. It may come in the form of some marked realization in the soul with or without emotion: it may come from some calm, inward voice of the spirit co-witnessing with some specific Scripture; or it may arise in some other way; but in order to power, it must exist. The element of reality,—some vital touch with the infinite One,—must be present before much motive power can

[1] Matthew 16 : 18, 19. [2] Luke 22 : 32.

be engendered to reach out victoriously after others, or before others will respond to the winner's touch.

In the first parish where I laboured lived a man, who was not only agnostic in his attitude towards things religious, but even derided them, and was wont to chaff his wife on her devotion to her church. The wife, however, went on her quiet but earnest way, living out her religion in the home. One morning very early the husband awoke and discovered his wife beside his bed absorbed in whispered prayer. Her pale, upturned face was fixed with intensity upon the Invisible, and her warm hand was resting upon his own, she supposing him to be asleep. As the husband's eyes opened on the unexpected scene, the suggestion came like a flash to his soul, "My wife's God is more real to her than her husband is. If she is so in earnest for my welfare as to rise at such an hour and pray alone for me, it is time I had some care for my own soul"; and he instantly arose from his bed, knelt beside her and added his own prayer to hers. He gave his heart to God on the spot, and that very morning came to the early meeting at the church and announced his change of heart; the next Sabbath he united with the church. The conviction of reality in the wife's intimacy with God was what roused and brought him; the wife had something to impart, which of itself wrought to open the husband's soul.

During my visit to Tokio, Japan, I met a superior Japanese youth, a convert of the American Episcopal Mission. I had been asked to speak to our native church in the locality. This young man interpreted for me, and a friendship which has continued till now sprang out of the incident. Afterwards he told me how he was converted. He had come to Tokio full of ambition for the best education he could get. Being ill-prepared, however, to enter the Imperial University, as he desired, he was admitted to the Episcopal Academy under the saintly Bishop Williams. At length a fit of rebellion took possession of the students because of the poor accommodations in the school and this young man and his roommate, a professing Christian, were deputized to go to the bishop and announce the purpose of many of their number to leave the school. Said the young man, "We appeared before the bishop with our complaint and said that we could no longer put up with the poor accommodations; evidently, the mission cared little for our welfare. We two students roomed over on the north side of the building where the sun never entered, and we were often chilled to discomfort and we would not stand it longer. The bishop beamed upon us with benevolent surprise, and said:

"'Why, young gentlemen, this will never do; you are not going to leave the school. True, our mission is slow in providing better accommodations, but they

will come soon. Meanwhile, we are bound to do the best we can for our students. We expect you young men in the future to become the bishops and leaders in the Japanese churches. As for yourselves in particular, I'll tell you what we can do. I have a good warm room on the sunny side of the school; now you young gentlemen come over and occupy my room and I myself will go over and take yours.' 'Oh, no!' we both exclaimed; 'we would not have you do that; we did not mean that.' 'But that's what I mean,' said the bishop; 'that's what will be done.' We again remonstrated and my fellow student, a Christian boy, began to weep with chagrin and brokenness of heart, and soon I found I too was weeping. I never before had seen anything like that and my heart broke under it. Why, sir, there was a light in that good bishop's face similar to that which I think Saul saw on the way to Damascus. I could not stand it and I was converted on the spot." It is ever so; the agnostic soul discovers in some follower of Christ a surprising something which he himself has not, and the vision smites him to penitence and faith. It is the aureole on the face of believers as on that of their risen Lord which compels conviction and wins assent.

Ten years afterwards, the young man referred to above renewed acquaintance with me in Boston, an earnest Cambridge divinity student. During the last

year he has served as a member of staff to an important envoy to the United States, and is identified with the highest ideals for the new Japan.

Along with our sense of deep blessing from God, when it exists, will spring up also the realization of the soul-poverty of those who are without God, and the corresponding conviction that God waits to enrich and fill such souls if they but once open to Him. I was once introduced to a singularly gifted man in my parish who was a major in the Civil War, and who after the war won standing as a man of business and in social circles. But, alas, he had become addicted to drink, and was rapidly wrecking all his prospects and breaking the heart of devoted relatives. Through a friend, uncommon personal interest in this man was aroused. I invited my new friend to my home for long conversations; I called at his office again and again, told him of the high hopes I cherished for him, hovered about him for weeks, until the vision of new possibilities for the discouraged man became controlling. Other friends cooperated with great earnestness and skill. At length the man reasoned, "This must be a divine concern which these several friends have for me; no human self-interest would so follow me; now is my time to cooperate with this heaven-sent power"; and he did, and shortly to the astonishment of the whole community, he publicly confessed Christ and became a winner of other souls, his

testimonies to the new grace received carrying great weight to multitudes.

Often when one is in the right way, a particular soul is laid upon his heart with great weight, until he feels that he cannot be denied his craving for that friend's salvation. Undoubtedly it is the divine spirit which imposes such burdens, and this is often evidence that the desire so cherished is to be granted. I recall such an instance. It was in my native town. I had seen the spirit of God's grace at work, bringing many to repentance. Among those for whom my desire grew was one man in particular for whom I had had high appreciation for many years. He and his family were far above the average in intelligence and cultivation : as neighbours they were genial to a high degree, but they were entirely irreligious, rarely attending church. At length one night I was awakened with intense concern respecting this man, and could not sleep again for the depth of my feelings. I found my wife in a similar state of mind respecting him, and we arose to pray together for him with all our powers. The next day I made it my first errand to go and see this man. I was particularly anxious to see him alone, and as I went I prayed for such an opportunity. Driving around a turn in the road under the hill below his home, I saw him coming from his mill, which was a few rods distant. The Lord seemed to say to me, "There, I have given him

into your hand." As I came nearer I could see the signs of agitation in his face and I think he would have hidden behind the hedge by the roadside, if he could have done so unobserved. This encouraged me. At length meeting him face to face, I said, "Isaac, I have come after you this morning."

With the familiarity of our earlier days, he replied, "Henry, I know it, what do you want of me?"

I replied, "Isaac, so deep is my interest in your salvation that if it were necessary I would crawl on my hands and knees for miles if I could share with you my sense of Christ."

Said he, "I have no doubt of it: I have known for years how you felt for me. I remember hearing you pray aloud for me years ago as you rode by my place on your pony late in the evening on the way from the church to your father's house. I was husking corn by the roadside behind the stooks in the moonlight, and you did not know I heard you, but I did."

"Well," I said, "that's true, I have loved your soul all this time, and now I want you to come along."

"All right," he said, "I have come; it's settled now." And he invited me up to the house. There I had further conversation with his wife, his daughters, and others in the family circle, and we all knelt and prayed together. It will easily be believed that

I had the pleasure of seeing this entire family, to the number of five, shortly gathered into the church. But what impressed me in that case, as in many others in my memory, is that multitudes of people really feel divine emanations from us, if we are in the spirit of love and grace towards them—simply yearning to impart those blessings to them—even though we do not speak a word. When, therefore, the right moment comes for the word to be spoken, we are often surprised to find the work already wrought. The truth is God's spirit always goes before us; and if we relied upon that fact more absolutely, we should often find our way prepared, and the saving work done with scarcely a word spoken on our part.

Then if from the appreciation one has of certain natural powers in unconverted people, he is moved to idealize those same powers, to think of them as they might be if consecrated to Christ, his influence over such people unconsciously to himself will grow, and this will also tend to the discovery of the real key to their hearts. There is nothing so inventive, so discerning as love.

In a western town where I had a pastorate for a period, there was a high-spirited woman, a former schoolmate of mine, who was frequently visited and found very open-hearted, although somewhat mystified as to what the religious movement in progress

portended for herself. This woman's manner of life was entirely worldly. She had some notoriety for nerve and horsemanship ; and had gained reputation for uncommon public spirit. In the presidential campaign of the previous year, when Mr. Blaine was a candidate, she had organized a mounted troop of patriotic young women, who on occasions would ride in torchlight processions with their husbands or escorts. I became intensely desirous of seeing this uncommon woman a Christian. Familiar as I was with this late popular demonstration on her part, I thought I saw how to use it for her welfare. Accordingly, when I called one day to press home Christ's claims, the lady inquired,

"What is it you want of me anyway and what would you have me do? I don't see that I am so very bad."

I replied, "Probably not. But do you recall how prominent, how decided, and how fearless was the position you took in the Blaine Presidential Campaign?"

"Indeed I do."

Then said I, "I wish you to become as pronounced in allegiance to Jesus Christ as you were known to be for James G. Blaine, 'the plumed knight of Maine.'" She was astonished, but she was impressed. The appeal reached her and she understood it.

"Well," said she ; "that would be a pronounced position indeed ; do you mean it?"

"Certainly I mean it; nothing less than that will do for you, and in this community. Christ must become supreme, or what others suppose to be supreme, above all else in your life. You were not ashamed of Blaine, you will not be ashamed of the Redeemer of your soul. You cannot do anything by halves. This is what I want you to do in order that you may assure yourself and others what is really supreme in your life; and in doing this, you are certain also to find assurance from God." The ideals this woman had allowed for herself in things worldly made it impossible for her to entertain small estimates in things spiritual; otherwise there would have been little reality in them, and they would have seemed unworthy of her. I also doubt if terms less than these would have appealed to her. She was startled at the unexpected ideal presented, but she could not dismiss it from her mind. A few evenings later this proud spirited woman came to one of my meetings, and at an opportune moment came directly to the front, faced the congregation, and referring to the conversation above detailed, concluded by saying, "And now I wish it to be understood by everybody that just as publicly and decidedly as I was lately recognized by citizens of this town as devoted to the candidacy of Mr. Blaine for the presidency of the nation, so now I am committed to Jesus Christ as the King of the universe and of my heart." She of course came into

peace and blessing, and was conspicuously useful in influencing others to a similar decision. On summer nights she would take a pair of horses and a barge and carry a dozen or more young people miles away into the country to certain meetings I was then conducting, that they might sing and otherwise help on the work; as prominent for Christ as for Blaine.

The soul-winner must be in a position to demand large things, ideally high things, such as at times may shock his fellows into attention and thoughtfulness. He must cherish higher possibilities for unregenerate souls than they begin to think he cherishes: vastly higher than they cherish for themselves. They need to be waked up and shaken out of their own low self-estimates by some spiritual idealism which begins to rate them and their capabilities as God does. The temptation is to make too little of the change contemplated; we make conversion too easy; we talk down to people, and both we and the ideals presented as motives to win, make little impression. Conscience respects the heroic, even the apparently impossible, if it only be coupled with a clear requirement of the living and everlasting God.

I call to mind a bashful young farmer in the west, who had grown up far from the atmosphere of the church and to whom the habits of religious meetings were unfamiliar, saying to me when I urged upon him to come to the prayer-meeting that night in a

neighbouring farmhouse, and openly confess with the mouth his need of Christ,

"I never could stand up and talk in that way before people, even though I wanted to; it would kill me to do it."

"Well," I replied, "die then: I know how hard it is for you, but Christ commands the impossible. He told Peter to come to Him walking on the water, and as long as Peter kept his eye on the Lord, he also walked the waves. He commands you to confess Him before men and I shall expect you to do it to-night, even though you die in doing it." To the meeting this timid man came. When he rose to speak he laboured as if he were Atlas lifting the world on his shoulders. The effort crushed the cowardice out of him; for before he sat down he sang the song of the new life. By faith he attempted the impossible: he seized the ideal he knew. Christ met him in the act, and he came into a saved state.

One's zeal for the salvation of souls, moreover, will greatly depend on the attitude which the imagination assumes, whether it be negative or positive. One may picture to himself the soul negatively, in its sin and wretchedness from which it needs to be delivered, or it may cherish the possibilities, positively speaking, into which the soul may be brought in Christ. Which conception rules will make all the difference.

I recall having seen some years ago in a western

city, two strikingly contrasting pictures, pictures since used somewhat widely by Mr. Moody. They were likenesses of a notorious prisoner, a Missouri criminal by the name of Valentine Burke, who for twenty years was one of the worst characters known to the police. The first likeness was taken against his will, and long hung in the rogue's gallery : it was labelled "No. 1010–A." While there were marks of power and manhood in the features of this likeness, yet they revealed desperateness and abandonment of character, and were very revolting. You would not have cared to meet such a face alone after nightfall. Then there was another picture of the same man which we will call picture "number two." The face of a man of great dignity, of uncommon calm, of real nobility and spiritual purity : a lofty brow, with hair thrown back, in impressive pose. In short, it was the face of a man fit to adorn the judge's bench. One could hardly have believed this to be a photograph of the same man as shown in the other picture. But seven years had intervened between the two. The grace of God had entered that man, and had renewed the springs of life, and rewritten every line of his face as well. While in the St. Louis jail, Burke had obtained a copy of a city paper which published a sermon by Mr. Moody, then preaching in St. Louis; this paper announced the topic of Mr. Moody's sermon in a sensational headline, "How the Jailer at

Philippi was Caught." Burke thought the reference was to the town of Philippi in Illinois, a place of which he knew; and he began to read what he supposed to be jail news. He reasoned "The jailer has often caught me; now we'll see who caught him." He soon saw his mistake, and at first was angered; but he became interested as he read on. Nine times in the sermon he came upon the text, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It impressed him so deeply that in the cell that night for the first time Burke prayed. Soon after he believed, and was assured of salvation. The jailer thought Burke was playing the "pious dodge," and only suspected him the more. When the case came to trial, however, through a technicality, he escaped conviction, and was released. For some months the ex-convict could find no one so to trust him as to give him steady work. He surmised it was because the lines of past sin had made his face so ugly, and he prayed to God to make him better looking. He finally was given a position under the sheriff of the county, made the collector of the office, and until he died some time afterwards, Burke never disappointed the confidence reposed in him. On one occasion he met a friend in the street and stopped him to say, "Look at my hands and see what the grace of God has done, when I tell you that just now Captain Mason the sheriff, put into these hands $60,000 to carry to the bank for deposit."

The photo "number two" was taken after this great change had come about, and his face so altered that none would recognize it as that of the same man. So universal was the confidence which Burke won in his new life, that finally the old picture which hung in the rogue's gallery was handed over to him. He sent the originals of the two likenesses above described to a Mr. McPheeters of St. Louis, who had befriended him, and wrote on the back of the picture "number two," this text from the one hundred and thirteenth Psalm, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people."

Now in practical efforts for the salvation of lost men, if we would gain the higher inspiration for the service, let the moral imagination particularly construct to itself the image of man "number two." Doing thus we shall see as God sees, not the "natural face"—the face of birth,[1] but of the *New Birth.* In other words we shall see the divine possibilities in the soul; we shall begin to love that ideal as God loves it, and cherishing it, nothing will daunt us in the effort to secure its actualization in life.

[1] James 1 : 23.

II

THE EVANGELIZING MESSAGE

And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.—*Heb.* 12 : 24.

As we proceed, there are two things to be kept clearly in mind, and of which we shall separately speak, namely, the objective evangelizing message, and the subjective process of inducing men to come into right relation to that message. In this chapter we deal only with the former matter. Later on, we shall take up the subjective side of the problem, and put large emphasis on it.

He who would evangelize effectively needs to have a right view, first, of the divinely wrought basis on which evangelization is possible. He needs a clear view of the evangelizing message. Then he must follow also the right process in rendering available its benefits. The moment we begin to think of evangelizing, it is natural to call up the whole range of speculative truth,—take account of our theological "stock in trade,"—in which we have confidence, but which we erroneously suppose needs to be grasped as a whole by those who would be saved; and we wake up to find that many do not grasp any part of it. If we are to be skillful as evangelists, we must learn

to delimit the content of our message in the interest of strategic skill.

I am not now saying aught against the holding of a theological system and a correct one. I am simply speaking of the way in which we should use it for the technical purpose of starting men Christward.

At a Bombay missionary conference, Dr. R. A. Hume was asked by a Parsi native preacher if he was accustomed when preaching to tell people that they were born in trespasses and sins. Dr. Hume replied, "Never." The native inquired, "Is that taught in the Bible, and do you believe it?"

Dr. Hume replied, "Yes, it is taught in the Bible and I believe it, but I don't preach it, because that is not part of the good message which I have to give to men. It is hard enough to make Hindus realize that they are now in trespasses and sins for which they themselves are responsible. If I should say that they were born in trespasses and sins, they would probably lay it on their parents and the more readily excuse themselves from responsibility." Of course Dr. Hume meant that in his evangelizing message to Hindus, he was careful to focus everything upon the point of awakening new hope of immediate salvation through Christ, and while so doing he kept more speculative questions in abeyance.

It is at this point that preaching in many pulpits is often vague and ineffective. It is too general: or

its use of theoretic truth is too disproportionate to be strategic.

What is it to evangelize? And what is the specific message needful to secure results? It is of course easy to say that to evangelize is to "preach the gospel," but the word gospel in many quarters has lost its meaning. At a time, therefore, when the term is used by men as variant in their interpretation of it as Tolstoi, Edward Everett Hale, Sabatier and Dr. R. A. Torrey, it cannot be quite clear what is meant by the term "Gospel"; hence it needs defining.

The gospel is the "God-spell." It is that because it is news so surprising, so unexpectedly gracious as when understood brings us under spell to God, a divine enchantment, a renewing fascination, as no other message ever did or could. It seems too good to be true, an unbelievable reality:—that God should have provided Himself a lamb so sufficient for our sins that both their curse and power, through our faith in Him, may be destroyed forever.

Be it remembered that the word "evangelize" is an exclusively biblical word; it would never have been heard of in our world but for the fact that God had something to disclose which man could not have found out without a revelation. To evangelize is to tell good news, that which is really news and that which is surprisingly joyful news,—a real saving message. To evangelize is to point out to men how

they may come into a new moral and religious status, under a régime which God had made possible through the sacrificial work of Himself in His Son. To evangelize a soul is to make clear to it the evangelical status made possible for it by Christ. To evangelize is to place in thought under the ægis—the protection—of an evangelical probation; an entirely different sort of probation from any that man could possibly conceive for himself apart from the Bible. The basis for this new, this previously unthought of, probation is of course found in that specific work of Christ which was wrought by His cross. The teaching of the cross as central in Christianity, expresses God's eternal and fathomless pain for man's sin and His readiness to do everything morally possible to reclaim him from it. This, beyond anything else conceivable, is adapted to awaken repentance and a desire to sin no more. The new probation which we are privileged to announce to men as made possible by the cross, is that under which all men in the world come into being, even though they do not know it. It is conditioned upon the fact that there is a "lamb slain (foreordained) from before the foundation of the world."[1] So great and so originative is God's love that He purposed and provided this basis of salvation from eternity. The whole actual divine government for mankind takes its character and form from this

[1] 1 Peter 1 : 20.

redemptive work of God in Christ. This was the ground purpose of the universe. It was anterior to creation and to the incoming of sin upon earth. Every soul born into the world therefore is born under a redemptive economy,—under the ægis of grace. It is born of course a partaker of the sin of the first man Adam; but it is also born with an inchoate, an incipient, relation to Christ, the last Adam. It has a heredity of evil from Adam, but it has also a new potential heredity of grace from "the last Adam."[1] But how far from such a conception are the common thoughts of men! It is a thing too new, too original for them readily to entertain. Hence the danger is that the soul will fall in with the first heredity, and repudiate its possibilities of new heredity in Christ. Hence the perpetual need of preaching of the best sort.

Doubtless most, perhaps all, souls, do at first repudiate the principle of this new heredity; that is, they ignore or deny God's gracious intention for them; hence it is that men need to be evangelized, even very young children need to be. They need to reverse their attitude where rebellious self-will has asserted itself, at that very point where they had repudiated their new birthright in Christ and its claim upon them. And all impenitent souls to the last hour of earthly life need to be called upon to repent of that

[1] 1 Cor. 15 : 45.

repudiation, and to claim positively for themselves that evangelical status under the atoning work of Christ which was their misunderstood or despised new heritage. Hence, the ever-present need of the evangelist. Both age and youth supremely need to be *evangelized:* it is at the point just indicated that they need to be evangelized, and established in habits of a new personal relation to Christ. In order to this, men have to be awakened and recovered from those false conceptions of probation so common, especially from legalistic conceptions, from dependence upon mere outward morality, and from that indifferentism and fatalism which suppose that sinful situations cannot be helped, and so must simply be stoically endured.

In view of the issue which I have now presented, it will be seen what I mean by the evangelizing message. It is the message which announces that on the basis of what Christ has done in His eternal atonement, a new kind of probation, namely a probation of grace[1]—offering salvation by gift outright, on the

[1] By the term "probation of grace," we mean that probation by which one is placed in new relation to a person—God as seen in Christ—rather than to a broken, abstract law; a probation under which the test of character is determined by one's penitent and believing attitude to the personal Redeemer, rather than to legal conformity to an abstract statute. Man, in his rudimental state in Eden, lost his one and only opportunity to do that before he fell. In the garden, our first parents were tested with respect to their obedience to such a law. Under the gospel system, the attitude

ground of what Christ has done in His new covenant or will, exists for all, is their new birthright. It is therefore to be accepted by faith as a free gift.

In my parish in Indianapolis, was a bright young lawyer who occasionally came to church but in a rather cynical attitude. He soon married a young woman, who was the particular joy of the church, as an earnest Christian worker. It was a surprise to many that she should have formed an alliance with the gentleman referred to. Once married, however, the young woman found herself in an agony of religious concern for him ; and of course she prayed with great intensity, for his conversion ; and she enlisted other friends to the same end. For a time, however, the result seemed doubtful. Legally trained as he was, proud of his morality and habituated to ignore all forms of religion, his indifference continued, to the distress of many. About that time, in my mid-week meetings, I was giving a series of Bible-readings on the ethico-evangelical acts of faith successively enjoined in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Starting from the notable defect of Israel, namely, his disobedience[1]

of one's personality at the centre, towards the sacrificial and risen Saviour and Lord—a new Master—is the vital matter. In this latter conception we speak of the probation as "new" or "altered." It is, of course, only relatively so. It is really the oldest conception of probation, the one which God eternally entertained for man ; it was new, only in its historical manifestation.

[1] In the reviser's text we have the Greek word ἀπείθεια (diso-

before Canaan's gateway, Kadesh-Barnea, I introduced into the series of readings, a study on "the New Will, or Testament" of Christ. From the many legal references associated with the idea, I thought the study would interest this lawyer friend, and I gave him a special invitation to come and hear it: to see "if the will would stand." He accepted, and I proceeded with my exposition of "The New Will." In my study I traced the parallels between the ordinary legal transaction of bequeathing property in a "Last Will and Testament," and the provision in Christ's "Last Will and Testament" for the spiritual welfare of all believers. I pointed out that in the old covenant as ministered by Moses two parties were required to the covenant, whereas in Christ's new covenant or will, it was the act of one party,[1] namely, God in Christ. He offers salvation to His heirs as a pure gratuity. The New Testament is really a codicil to the former will, superseding and abrogating it.[2]

In the will of Christ I accented several points in the parallel, for example: (1) that it was grounded on a *promise;*[3] (2) that there was an *estate to be divided*—an eternal inheritance,[4] an actual spiritual value to be bequeathed, (3) that by the Spirit a *new principle of*

bedience) instead of ἀπιστία (unbelief) as in the received text. Of course the thought is of a disobedience which had its root in unbelief. See Hebrews 3 : 12, 18, 19; 4 : 6.

[1] Gal. 3 : 20.
[2] Heb. 8 : 13.
[3] Gal. 3 : 18; *Ibid.* 4 ; 28.
[4] Heb. 9 : 15.

heirship was formed [1] in the regenerate heart; (4) that the values in the will were available only on *the death* of the testator;[2] (5) and that this will had to be *probated* or passed upon in the *judgment work of Christ's death* recognized when He ascended to glory;[3] (6) and that Christ as risen from the dead, "ever liveth" and becomes the *executor of His own will.*[4]

This view of the objective truth had produced a most solemn impression on the meeting, and for a few moments there was profound silence. Suddenly, however, my legal friend, to the surprise of all, arose and spoke about as follows:

"My friends, I have been deeply interested as a lawyer, in this presentation. I think the points made have all been well taken; but from my point of view there is something left out. Pardon me if I supply it." Turning to two or three other lawyers who sat near, he remarked, "Gentlemen of the legal fraternity about me here will corroborate the point I make. When a will is probated in our courts, it is well-known that the legatees, or heirs named in the will, are expected to appear before the court and by formal act elect either to accept what the will allows, as expressed in the terms of the will, or they appeal to the law; they elect either to 'take under the will,' or 'take under the law,' *i. e.*, try to break the will. Friends,

[1] Heb. 8 : 10.
[2] *Ibid.* 9 : 15–18.
[3] *Ibid.* 9 : 24–28.
[4] *Ibid.* 7 : 24, 25.

I have been casting about in my mind to see whether I should get anything out of the bequest if I were to appeal to the law. I see no prospect of getting anything thus; the will is not likely to be remade for my benefit and I have no hope that I could break the will. I think the only thing that remains for me if I get my portion is to 'take under the will.' My friends, I here and now elect to 'take under the will.'"

The gentleman sat down; his astonished wife and, indeed, the whole meeting were overcome under this extraordinary and original declaration. It was a surprising act, but it was the fitting response to the evangelizing message.

It is important in all our preaching, however varied the themes, so to present truth as to show the soul, first, its evangelical status under Christ, and then its evangelical relations to Christ in all the practical conduct of life. It is one's relation to Christ that should determine his business habits, his politics, his domestic and social relations, his recreations and all else he thinks and plans and does; and all this needs to be preached as implicates of Christ's redemption. To do this successfully in great variety of form and freshness of expression is the supreme achievement of the Christian pulpit. For the failure to do this well, great numbers of people in our congregations live and die in confusion respecting the things which God con-

stantly requires of them, in the relations of their complex human lives.

The indefinite and loose ways in which these relations have often been conceived and stated, are doubtless fundamentally due to the vagueness which prevails respecting the nature of Christ's atoning work, and its implicates. Any marked increase in evangelistic power which shall bring that wide-spread revival for which many long, can come only with the emergence of the ministry from enveloping mists respecting the cross of Christ. That cross must be interpreted with more discrimination, clearness and passion than heretofore. Indeed there can be no heavenly passion in the pulpit, where the divine meanings of Christ's cross are indefinitely conceived, superficially felt, or vaguely stated.

It may be timely to hint in passing one important distinction, which, if it alone was grasped, we think would go far to clear away some obscurities which greatly becloud the gospel message. This distinction concerns the very nature of this message on which we have been focusing attention. It may appropriately be mentioned here. We refer to the distinction between the cross of the atonement and the tragedy of the crucifixion. These two things lie side by side in history; but they represent opposites in principle. The tragedy represented man at his worst; it was the crime of the ages, sin at its worst. The cross of the

atonement was the sublimest act in the moral history of God; it was the provision of His last will and testament for the salvation and spiritual enrichment of man; it was God at His best; it represented what was being enacted on the divine side of the central event in earth's history. It represented a sacrifice on God's part which, while it was historical, was also eternal in principle; it cost the Father as much as it did the Son; it was wholly voluntary; it adequately compassed the sin-problem of the universe; it was adapted to cure sin and to recover believing mankind from its curse and power.

That divine transaction and the implied relations of mankind to it, determine for every one the kind of being he is to be, the kind of life he is to live, and the kind of destiny he is to seek. To "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" is to accept for oneself by an act of will as well as heart,—by an executive act of the soul,—the relations under the probation of grace which God purposes for him. The cross is to form the new motive power in his life under the spell of which, properly understood, man is to live, move and have his new being. This is to render evangelical the whole habit of the new life in Christ: it is to render evangelical all practical ethics; for the ethic that is not more than ethical, even evangelical, is unethical for a fallen human being intended to be redeemed.

In the light of the foregoing statements it will be seen that when the Bible speaks of redemption "by the blood of Christ," it means redemption through the self-sacrificing work of God in Christ of which His blood is the symbolic life-principle.

In the museum connected with the monument to Abraham Lincoln at Springfield, Illinois, among other relics suggestive of the spirit and mission of the great emancipator of four million slaves, is treasured a piece of the rich gown worn by Laura Keene, the actress, in Ford's theatre, Washington, on the tragic night when Lincoln fell. After the fatal shot of the assassin, Miss Keene sprang to the box and caught in her lap the head of the slain president, while the blood from the oozing wound saturated a portion of her garment. After the event, that blood-stained breadth was cut from the gown, sent to Springfield and preserved as the speaking symbol of the great sacrificial life which Lincoln lived even unto death, on behalf of the redemption of the black slaves of the South. Could we imagine one of those redeemed men on a visit to Lincoln's tomb looking at that emblem and properly remaining indifferent to its appeal? Nay, rather, we would say that henceforth with a new abandon of personality the ransomed man should live his life spellbound to the moral majesty of the offering of the great president on his behalf. For that man, repentance would

mean repudiation of any past indifference to the price paid for his emancipation ; and faith would mean a new, thorough resignation of himself to the moral mastery of the great ideals for which the name of Lincoln stands. Life henceforth for him would mean the acceptance of his new probation as a freedman, with all the fascinating possibilities of his new citizenship as a redeemed man. The evangelizing message for the freedman of the South would be the new potentialities made his through the priceless sacrifices of the Civil War culminating in the devotement of the nation's head to his redemption.

And so, bearing in mind the inadequacy of the human illustration, the evangelizing message to a world of sinful men, is the proclamation of the new and relatively speaking, altered probation made possible to men through the sacrificial lamb eternally slain for them.

The wise, tender, divinely persuasive presentation of this message, this or nothing will ever evangelize and hold under spell to God, this world,—that is, Christianize it.

III

THE IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL AIM

How can I except some one shall guide me?—*Acts* 8 : 31.

We now come to the subjective side of our problem. In the effort to win the soul of a given individual, the form of the effort will greatly depend upon the moral and even the mental attitude which the soul sought is supposed to hold. Often there is correct belief respecting the fundamental Christian facts, such as the Saviourhood of Christ, His atoning work and the rightness of discipleship to Him; and little more is needed than so to win the confidence of the soul as sympathetically to help it to yield the will in believing trust to truth already known. Probably really Christian parents in dealing with their children, and Sunday-school teachers with their simple-hearted pupils, will commonly be successful even with limited skill, if their effort only be whole hearted and sympathetic.

There are, however, great numbers of people of maturer years, especially in times like ours, who are in great suspense and uncertainty of mind respecting speculative interpretations of Christianity, and yet who are not unfriendly to the consideration of practical discipleship to Christ. There is there-

fore occasion for much careful thought in defining to oneself just how to proceed in direct efforts for these. Many are of vacillating habit or disposition, or argumentative in mind, and so have become torpid and inactive in reference to God: they are befogged, in the dark, and sincerely sceptical concerning the realities claimed for Christian experience. They thus settle into chronic agnosticism. How shall we deal with these? What should be our practical and immediate aim? We answer in one sentence, "put them on the clue" through some subjective committal of themselves, whereby in the end they will come to the needed realization of God and divine things. Wherever, however, any such soul comes into new spiritual realization and so is consciously saved, we may be sure it is always through the energy of the Holy Spirit, and on the ground of the atonement of Christ—the atonement which, in God's "nature of things," is eternal reality, however imperfectly it is grasped intellectually.

I recall a conversation with an agnostic relative of mine, a typical instance of the class just referred to, which may make clear our principle. This relative was a man of much thought and reading, bred in a family of pronounced Christian faith, but the marked exception in the household who had shown disinclination to accept Christianity; and he was apparently candid in his position. His mind,

however, was argumentative in type: he lived in the realm of theory, and to him Christianity, so readily apprehended by his family relatives, seemed wholly out of reach. As we were conversing together one day, he suddenly inquired:

"How do you explain all those mysterious things in the Bible?" by which he meant the realities of supernatural revelation of God as a whole.

I replied, "I don't explain them: I take them in the main just as they stand; I can't explain them."

"Why," answered he, "I thought you ministers pretended to explain all these things."

I replied, "No, we don't; we expect to have the explanation some time." Then turning to him, I inquired:

"And now, how do you explain them? These problems are as much yours as they are ours."

"Oh," he replied, "I can't make anything of them; they are all Greek to me."

"Exactly," I answered; "but in one respect at least we believers have this advantage over you; we have *found the clue*, the key, to the explanation of these things now so far beyond us; and that is vastly better than nothing.

"The case is like this; suppose you and I were out in the depths of a vast forest; night comes on, and even after the day breaks no sun appears, and the

heavens are dark with clouds. You finally speak up and say,

"'We are lost.'

"I reply, 'As for you, you are lost; you know not even the points of the compass. Quite so. But as for me, while I am your companion in the circumstances, I still know the trail. I, no more than you, can see the open; but follow me, and I will bring you out at last. This is vastly better than stark bewilderment.'" To this he had no reply to offer. He could simply inquire how I found the trail when he had missed it, and this gave me opportunity to show him that there were deep, experimental, subjective tests of richer worth than all possible speculative ones, whereby one could progressively find his way into the truth of God. These experimental tests involving the action of the heart, the conscience and the will, he had never applied to the problem, and of course he had thus shut himself out from many precious secrets. This was all I could do for him; give him my testimony as a real witness and explain to him how to get on the clue; he must then live the amount of faith possible to him, hoping that step by step the explanation of the deep mysteries of revelation would come clear to him. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and not with those who stand outside the truth and merely patronize it as theory.

Of course one may wholly fail to induce his fellow, especially if his heart has become embittered and his will perverted, to make the experimental test. In such a case, however, the wicket-gate has been pointed out; the real and only key to the situation has been offered. If now the soul perishes, it perishes, a moral suicide. The skirts of his guide are clear. One perishing thus is not a truth lover, and for such there is no salvation, neither in this world nor in the world to come.

We are, however, persuaded that great numbers all about us are lost to Christ and the church because of the lack of skill on the part of those who are supposed to be competent spiritual guides in affording them a method of escape out of religious obscurity and confusion into the path of clear and growing light. There are teachers enough who can set forth the doctrines of Christianity, who can give most refined definitions of the new birth, atonement, justification, etc., who yet prove highly incompetent to make clear to men their actual relation to Christ. The secret of success is back of this. It is in managing through love and sympathy, and the tuition of the spirit of God, to get so near to the soul, to so win its confidence as to discover the secret of agnostic difficulty, and the real point where the remedy is to be applied. In most cases the soul to be won himself must and will, if followed with

sufficient love, give up the key to his own difficulty. This once gained, it remains but to turn back the bolt, enter, and lead the soul to Christ.

Some years ago in Indianapolis, I was preaching to a large evening congregation on the necessity of forgiveness of injuries, if such are cherished, as a condition of securing the peace of God. As the sermon progressed, I observed that the head of a man sitting directly before me went down on the back of the pew before him. In this attitude the man remained throughout the sermon and even after the service concluded. The benediction pronounced, I approached the man and found him under high tension of feeling. The congregation having withdrawn I drew from him this story:

"After the Civil War I went from the North into one of the southern states as an ambitious young lawyer and politician. I soon rose to some prominence and became a candidate for public office. During the heat of the campaign in which feeling ran high, one night when I was in the midst of a campaign address in the open air, a political enemy drew a pistol and shot me through the arm destroying this elbow joint, as a result of which I am crippled for life. My enemy secreted himself, was protected by the authorities, and although I sought him for months, to this day I have never overtaken him; but I have made a vow that if I ever meet him anywhere in this world, I

will kill him on the spot. Now," continued my friend, "you have been teaching here to-night that no man with resentment towards his fellow man in his heart can have hope of divine forgiveness: then what about that vow of mine?"

Of course this man was revealing the very gateway to the citadel of his being, and himself in the light of an awakened conscience was hinting to me that I might enter.

I gladly accepted the intimation, and the convicted man having been led to renounce his evil vow, surrendered to Christ and the sense of forgiveness immediately followed. Observe, however, that the action of this penitent was primarily a moral rather than an intellectual act—the application of an experimental test to the fidelity of God, and it was promptly honoured. There was a clue to that soul's deliverance. The confidence of the soul was somehow sufficiently gained to enable me to perceive the secret, and adding my sympathy and prayer to his disclosure of himself, the saving work was easily wrought.

Until such secret is gained, promiscuous efforts to convert people resemble a firing at random upon the hills surrounding Port Arthur, instead of ascertaining the susceptible points in fort after fort, and so following the path to conquest.

We who are ministers, trained as we are to consider truth in systematic theological forms, are prone to

suppose that as we are to maintain our faith firmly, so in method also we are to stand formally on our own dogmatic ground, and labour to bring men over to our way of thinking, theologically. Of course we are to maintain our ground; and yet tactically, in a true pedagogic method, it is essential that we should go over on to the territory occupied by the mind we would lead, and look at things from his point of view long enough to get into sympathetic touch on some single practical ideal, and thus move the discouraged, helpless one to take one brave unselfish step out of himself into a larger realization of truth; such a realization can come only through such a subjective act. It is impossible to force our view of truth into the mind of another. We must learn to take account of even the minimum of truth held by him, and then encourage the moral resolve to act upon the ray of light possessed. Thus only can any one's measure of light be increased, and the soul itself experience a personal first-hand realization of God.

As illustrative of this principle I give an incident which occurred during my pastorate in Minneapolis. I was invited by President Northrup of the University of Minnesota, to a parlour lecture on Russian literature to be given one evening at his home by an interesting and gifted young Russian—a graduate of Harvard University. He had been at one time a Nihilist in theory, a rank materialist, at times most

pessimistic in his view of life, and often had been tempted to destroy himself. Betimes he sought converse with leading philanthropists in Boston and elsewhere, seeking with his noble, impulsive nature in some way to relieve the distresses of poverty and wretchedness characteristic of great cities, but with little practical outcome. He was now giving the lectures referred to in cultivated parlour circles east and west. In the lecture I heard, I discovered a characteristic and plaintive note as he sought to interpret the various authors with whom he dealt, particularly Tourguenieff. It was the principle of self-renunciation and its correlative emergence into the after-peace which characterizes real self-abandonment to moral light. This was the precise principle into the deep reality and meaning of which after a period of long spiritual depression I personally was initiated through the grace of the Holy Spirit, in the second marked crisis in my life, which occurred while I was a pastor in Indianapolis, referred to in the preface. The passing of that crisis disclosed to me how heterodox in heart one may be, if he is in a wrong state of will, while yet being very orthodox in head. This experience greatly altered my conception of faith, and changed the whole practical method of my dealing with agnostic souls.

The man referred to greatly attracted me, as one whom I believed was groping for light and having my-

self had a profound experience on that principle, I hoped I might help him. At the time, however, he was far enough from faith in any form of evangelical truth. But this I thought quite subsidiary for the time. I observed in a daily paper a few days afterwards that this friend had been invited to attend a meeting of ministers of the liberalistic wing, in the city. The report of the meeting which I read also stated that when this Russian gentleman, although a guest of the meeting, came to speak, he rather strongly reflected on the essayist of the morning, intimating that he had not thought through his question, and suggesting that a "lonely meditation of about forty days in the desert would probably lead the writer to burn his paper." Putting together these two things in the temper of the Russian—his appreciation of the renunciatory principle and his moral courage, I was led to invite him to lunch with me. We were entire strangers to each other, but we were soon in a close heart to heart converse, respecting the motif of his lectures. I was persuaded he was a sincere seeker after truth. I simply sought at this time to draw him out, and at length astonished him by asking him to come to my church the following Sunday evening and address my congregation on any theme he might choose. He was of course amazed that an orthodox minister who knew so little of him should extend such an invitation and hesitated, saying,

"What will your people think of me, a dilettante lecturer in swallow-tails, known chiefly in ladies' parlours, appearing in place of their minister?"

"Oh," I said, "of course I myself will be there; I shall introduce you, express my appreciation of your message as far as I have heard it and give you *carte blanche* to express yourself."

I was aware that I took some risk, but I felt certain that the best thing I could do for such a man was to disappoint his prepossession of mind that all orthodox people are necessarily narrow and intolerant. I took pains to explain the situation a little later to my deacons who approved my course in the circumstances, and we all awaited the outcome with prayerful interest. My Russian friend appeared, showing signs of some agitation, but evidently in earnest not to disappoint the courtesy extended. His address was upon Tolstoi and although by no means adopting his views, my friend reiterated that note of self-renunciation in order to higher life, which he had declared to be so central in the previous lecture I heard. This principle of course is vital in Christianity, although at the time I think the man scarcely knew it. We thanked him for his lecture, assured him of our interest in him, and for the time parted.

The incident passed, and my friend left for Boston with the promise to write me. It was not long until I received a letter giving an account of intense exer-

cises in secret prayer, of long walks into the country by himself alone, on one of which occasions he had found a secluded spot and bowed down before the Saviour of the world and accepted His atoning sacrifice in his behalf, and was now rejoicing in Him as his Redeemer. I was not surprised. He further asked if I would baptize him in case he would come back to Minneapolis. I of course assented, and he came. His second appearance before my congregation with the testimony of profound Christian experience, evangelical to the core, was received with amazement and wide rejoicing. The event also commanded very general attention in the city and opened the way for numberless conversations with men of his class who perhaps would not have opened their mind to any minister whatever.

The point in method was this. I seized upon the modicum of truth which I perceived this man held. I presumed upon it, encouraged him to risk himself upon it, and shortly in so doing he came into a new state. The man was put upon the clue to his own first-hand realization of Christ, and it led him to the goal.

One of the most interesting characters in attendance upon the late Baptist Congress in London was Baron Woldemar Uixkiull, another Russian, a representative of the greatly persecuted Baptist churches of that empire. He is a man of wealth, living on

his baronial estates in Esthonia, one of the Baltic provinces. He was brought up in luxury amid the nobility, and as a child was often on the knees of the great Prince Bismarck, who was a frequent visitor at his father's palace. During an intimate conversation I had with him this summer, I drew from him the story of his conversion. He was for years an agnostic, having no sort of light upon the great spiritual problems of the soul. Finally, through the reading of Tolstoi's writings, he became convinced that there was some reality in the gospel story of Jesus Christ. He began to read the gospels. This further led him to pray, but in this limited way: "Oh, God, if there be a God in this universe, make Thyself known to me." And very shortly, as he thus concentrated his soul upon the supposition, the mere hypothesis, that there might be a God, and challenged Him to disclose Himself to him, suddenly, the light broke. He felt a sense of the deepest peace, and turning again to the Bible, he found it luminous from end to end with the explanation of the soul's spiritual history, and with the assurance that he himself was God's child. He shortly after led his wife into the same realization, and ever since, as a layman, has preached the gospel, given himself to building chapels for the poor, and in other ways evincing the profound nature of the divine change in his heart and life.

The real secret in soul-winning is not to win souls

to ourselves, nor to the acceptance of our dogmatic views, but into the practice of following their own light, and so to an interior experience of truth and God.

It is not ours to win people to the abandonment of their own theological traditions, and to the acceptance of our own dogmatic systems instead. People usually suppose us to be doing this: this we need to disappoint as Jesus disappointed the woman at the well of Sychar. There is indeed a time for the imparting of theological instruction, even to the communication of some system of truth; but that time is not yet in the more primary process of soul-winning. The utmost we now need to do, the utmost we can do, in method, is to put a soul upon the clue to its own realization of Christ. If we do this, we do much, because we help at least to strengthen, we may even initiate the habit of walking in the light, and this is to induct one into an act of faith; for in the last analysis an act of faith is nothing more nor less than the committal of the soul by an executive act, a collective act of the entire soul, to walk in the present measure of spiritual light possessed.

In that remarkable story given in the ninth of John, of the opening of the eyes of the man born blind, we have simply the account of how a man was led into faith, although everything is set before us under the forms of a man walking in the light, albeit

starting from utter night, and walking more and more bravely and loyally as the light increased until at length he became an open-eyed and luminous prophet testifying to Christ in the most exalted and confident terms.

The highest work we ever do for another soul is to afford incentive to treat the truth it already knows as a reality, and so to act upon it, risk something on it. This is the development of faith in another. It is putting the soul on the clue to personal and immediate realization of God. Thus and thus only can Christian experience so-called be begun or continued. As ministers of Christ, whether professionally so or not, this is our distinctive mission in the world; and happy is he or she who has developed tact and skill in so profound a matter. When this shall become general in the church, as we see it occasionally manifested in individual instances, the world-wide universal revival will have come.

And be it noticed, the spirit of such an evangelism is by no means exhausted when a specific result leading an unregenerate soul to its first experience of Christ is gained, because the whole spiritual life under the gospel in its method and ongoing is germinally contained in the taking of one such step. Each successive step in the divine life in whatever relations, is to be taken on the same principle of loyalty to light, as that on which the first step was

taken. It is from the failure to inculcate this in developing the newly begun life that after results in the lives of really converted people are so unsatisfactory. Young converts are not properly instructed and aided to the expression of this important principle in the unfolding habits of their entire career. For lack of this great numbers who come into the church truly converted, become either legalistic in their thought, or shortly grow confused, and lose their evangelical bearings. So then nothing short of a "reconversion," so-called, will set them right again. The whole habit of the new life needs to be rendered evangelical, to be continued on the basis of the evangelical status, under which as converts their new life began.

From this point of view the evangelism so profoundly and widely needed in our day and a far better type than is common, is itself necessary in order to train and accustom the church to live truly under the evangelical status in which the gospel would place and establish them, as well as to bring in new converts. Thus viewed the evangelization required is a vastly deeper and more universal thing than is commonly supposed.

IV

THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH

But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God.—*John* 3 : 21.

NOTHING is more certain than that for practical dealing with men, the soul-winner needs to have a clear conception of what constitutes saving faith. Doubtless in the general mind there is a supposition that faith is primarily the belief of a theological proposition ; a particular intellectual concept respecting Christ and certain aspects of His work. The fact that the Scriptures place such emphasis on the matter of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the further fact that in the apostolic writings there is a sharp antithesis drawn between what are called "works of law," considered as meritorious, and faith in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of men and the fulfiller of the law, partly explains this. But there is in the New Testament at least a third principle with a characteristic phrasing, which certainly is not the equivalent of doing the deeds of the law, nor is it discovered, in common thought, we fear, to be what it really is ; the synonym of real faith in God.

The principle we refer to is expressed by Jesus on

this wise: "He that *doeth the truth*, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they have been *wrought in God*." [1] Note the three activities expressed in this text; *doing the truth; increase of light* and a *divine operation* in the soul. The text implies that the right relation to Christ, such as is embraced by a personal faith in Him—a faith which commits itself to Him and makes a personal test of His reality and faithfulness—involves action upon some present measure of truth possessed:—enough truth to act on. As it does so, it comes to fuller illumination because the Spirit is cooperating until at length a divine operation, although quite below one's consciousness, is wrought in the soul. This is the miracle of faith in action, plus the correlative work of the Divine Spirit in the soul.

The entire Epistle of James, often in the past, even by Martin Luther, supposed to be a contradiction of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, is really a confirmation of Paul's doctrine and only another way of stating it. The works which James commends, for example, the act of Abraham in yielding up Isaac, are really *works of faith*, and not works of law, at all, and the work of faith is simply faith in action, faith proving itself real.[2] Even Paul himself, in the Epistle to the Romans, emphasizes the importance of "obeying the truth," and points out the

[1] John 3 : 21. [2] James 2 : 21–24.

fearful evil of "obeying unrighteousness,"[1] of "holding down the truth in unrighteousness."[2] Indeed, at one point Paul seems to afford promise even of eternal life, "to them that by patience in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and incorruption";[3] but if so, it is altogether on the principle of faith on the ground of Christ's atoning work of which they may as yet be in ignorance, while yet cherishing certain spiritual ideals. Paul certainly says that "glory and honour and peace are to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first and also to the Greek."[4] We should however miss the whole spirit of Paul's teaching if we failed to see that all these terms are intended by him, to be mere *expressions of faith;* that is, of a collective, executive act of the entire soul in the direction of the ideals which it cherishes and on the basis of the measure of light enjoyed, whether it be in the case of the Jew or the Greek.

Doubtless the failure to recognize this third form of Scripture teaching which we are now emphasizing, has led to deplorable misunderstandings between evangelicals and non-evangelicals, as it has also rendered narrow the interpretations of some evangelicals in considering the moral and spiritual status before God of many whose theological views are erroneous, or of those who have never known the historic Christ.

[1] Rom. 2 : 8.
[2] *Ibid.* 1 : 18.
[3] *Ibid.* 2 : 6, 7.
[4] *Ibid.* 2 : 10.

And so some workers in foreign missions have put much further away from them than they need to the so-called "heathen." The missionary erroneously supposes that before a soul reared in Paganism can even be started in the way of salvation, he must necessarily first be indoctrinated into a body of theological truth, and this matter seems so difficult in the face of ignorance, prejudice and superstition, that some workers are discouraged from the start, and accomplish little or nothing of value. Some justify their failure by thinking they are "seed-sowing," which may be true enough; but it is much more likely they are pursuing a mistaken pedagogic method.

Now in our effort to reach the heathen, we do well to ponder, for their pedagogic values, any and every aspect of religion however false or imperfect. Every form of religion, even the crudest fetishism, gives utterance to some deep hunger of the soul, and so hints a thought of God.

For example, animism,—spirit-worship—even at its lowest, holds a belief in the existence of a human spirit, in the antagonism of spirits good and bad, in the possibility of some sort of communion of spirits, and in the future life of spirits. The savage idolater often does not really worship the symbol before which he bows; he simply tries thus to realize and localize the spirit which he fears. The rude African

who would not complete a bargain with the European trader until he had time to go and bring his fetish which he had forgotten, is far nearer to God than the modern, nominal Christian who essays to conduct his business apart from his religion; nay, the African in loyalty to his crude conscience reads a needed lesson to all such as have forgotten that God has the most intimate relation to all business, even to corporate acts. Brahminism with all its grossness is at bottom a non-materialistic religion. It seeks to fit the spirit by endless transmigrations for a future life. Buddhism represents a half-truth, viz. : that the soul to find its true blessedness must lose itself. Its fundamental defect is that unlike Christianity, it does not show how through losing its lower life, the soul may *find itself* in the higher life, a life which Christ makes possible. The remnant of truth found in any of these religions should be used to put men on the clue to the realization of Christ, and of all that follows.

The essential principle at the root of all saving faith is loyalty to present spiritual light, a loyalty that is ready to act on its light. This being so, any soul may make an instant beginning anywhere, and with whatever measure of truth it has, in the school of Christ. I freely grant that this idea has not always prevailed, and is even now far from general acceptance among evangelicals. Many sincerely

suppose that in order to salvation in any degree, there must first exist in the mind a certain concept, or set of concepts, which in themselves must be dogmatically believed, before the soul can come into vital relation to Christ. This assumes that faith is primarily and essentially an intellectual belief; belief in *a doctrine about* God, or Christ, or the Bible. But this is not the truth concerning Christian faith, and never was. There is a place for intellectual beliefs, but this in the matter of method is at a later stage. Of course we do not forget that a certain modicum of objective truth must precede any subjective action of the soul. But some amount of such truth is always present to every mind.

Saving faith at its heart is a moral attitude of personality;[1] as such, therefore, any soul, anywhere, whatever its degree of illumination, is capable of exercising such faith in principle, the moment it is appealed to. Christianity, alone, of all religions, takes note of so elemental a thing as this. Christ in His school requires of no soul more than one step at a time, and that step a relative one, in view of all the conditions it faces. That step however may hold in itself the potentiality of all possible Christian living. Doubtless at this point many Christians have sadly misunderstood their own religion, and so they still place the cart before

[1] Rom. 2 : 15, 16.

the horse, in their initiative appeals to men. This really embarrasses Christianity and makes it needlessly slow of acceptance.

It is always a tactical mistake also to put religion as a philosophy over against any other form of religion as a philosophy, in a competitive way. Those who proceed as if Christianity were a competitive religion, always do so to the damage of Christianity; they misrepresent its spirit and distort its method. Christianity is not in the field to gain a partisan victory. Such victories as Christianity wins, it wins from intrinsic desert, because it complements the limited, or vitalizes the expiring hope in other systems. Christianity never seeks victory for its own selfish sake, but because of its genuine and exhaustless love for those whom it would win from error and shortsightedness; it came "not to destroy but to fulfill." It comes as sunrise comes, not to obliterate the starlight, but to suffuse it with a more original glow.

The following account of a method employed in dealing with a Roman Catholic will illustrate the principle.

Last summer I was observing the work of some labourers who were laying water pipes at Northfield, Mass. For several days I had noticed among the force a broad shouldered, big brained Irishman who was the principal man on the job, named Jim, a Roman Catholic. I came upon him one day at work

down in a trench six feet below the surface, lying flat on his stomach, tamping in the jute around the joints of a water main. He did not observe me as I sat down on the bank to watch him at his work. Shortly Jim called to an Italian attendant to bring him lead. The Italian promptly responded, bringing a ladle full of the molten metal but slopping it rather carelessly as he approached.

I cried out, "Careful, man, you'll burn the fellow down there."

Jim looked up surprised and taking in who I was, although we had barely learned each other's names, he said, "Well, doctor, if that lead is hot, what d'ye think about the hot place?"

I replied, "It's a good place to keep out of."

Jim answered, "But d'ye think there is such a place, anyway?"

I answered, "There is such a thing as a hot conscience, and that's the worst sort of a hell."

"Well," said Jim, "I observe that the clergy differ about these things. And then," he added throwing up his hands despairingly, "what's a man to do in my circumstances about religion, anyhow? Look at me amongst these Italians, and I only a poor plumber."

Observing that the man had appreciated my almost unconscious sympathy with him, and that he was reaching out after more, I warmed to him and said :

"My dear fellow, your work down there in that trench is just as acceptable to God, if you do it in the right spirit, as mine is preaching in the pulpit."

He looked up surprised, and continued: "Do you believe that?"

"Believe it? I know it! It's the one truth I'm trying to get everybody to believe."

"Well," replied Jim, "I think I must come up and have a talk with you."

I answered, "All right, Jim, I'm looking for the man that's looking for me. When will you come?"

He looked up with a quizzical twinkle in his eye: "I'll come—next Sunday afternoon—at four o'clock—if it doesn't rain."

"Well," I said, "come on, I'll be looking for you. If it rains I'll see you in the house."

"Oh," he said, "I don't want to come into your house; I want to see you alone."

"All right," said I, "I'll be out under the trees;" and I earnestly hoped it would not rain.

Four o'clock Sunday afternoon came, and true to his word Jim came sauntering up the walk, with what deep thoughts the sequel will tell. I was waiting to receive him, and we sat down under the trees together.

He opened by saying: "I've been working here in Northfield for six weeks. I'd like to live here always. I wish I could get a job to keep me the year round."

I answered, "Why, where do you live?"

He replied, "I live in hell—in S——."

"How so?" I answered.

"Well," said he, "you see I married unfortunately; my wife is a terror. She has fits of unaccountable madness; she will sometimes rouse me in the night and threaten to strangle me, and with no reason; the froth will stand out on her lips; she's like one possessed of the devil. She won't eat anything I buy; she thinks I mean to poison her. And yet for more than twenty years I have taken home all my wages week by week, and laid them down on the table, and said, 'Wife, there it is, spend it as you like'; and she has done it; I've not even bought a shirt for myself; and yet I'm only tormented by her. Some of my friends, one a judge, have said to me, 'Get quit of her, get a divorce,' but I've always said, 'I won't do it, she's my wife; "what God has joined together, let not man put asunder."' I won't leave her. I'll bear it."

His great chin quivered and the tears were on his lashes.

I said, "You bear that for principle's sake, do you?"

He said, "Yes, that's my cross."

I replied, "The Lord bless you, my dear fellow, that is Christianity,—bearing the painful thing for Christ's sake, for duty's sake."

I then added, "You must have prayed a good deal about this, not merely said prayers."

"Prayed," said he, "of course I have. I could never have borne it but for that."

I added, "God appreciates all that."

"And then," said he: "doctor, what do you think of purgatory?"

I said, "Jim, if you want to know what I think, there is no purgatory in the Bible, it's *salvation* Jesus brings. Do you know what the name 'Jesus' means?"

"No," he asked, "is that a Greek word?"

"Yes," I said, "that's Greek. The Hebrew word is 'Joshua' or 'Jehoshua'; it means 'deliverer,' from purgatory and all. The angel in the Bible said, 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall *save* His people from their sins.'[1] When Jesus undertakes to save a man He makes a clean job of it; He makes thorough work; He does not leave us in any purgatory."

Jim replied, "I half believe it. Then," he added, "tell me, doctor, why the priests say we are not to read the Bible."

I replied, "Jim, have you got a Bible?"

"Yes," said he, "a big, fine one; but I don't read it much; the priests tell me I mustn't."

"Well," I added, "I'm not going to quarrel with your priests, I'm your priest just now, and I tell you, read your Bible."

[1] Matt. 1 : 21.

"But," said he, "I wouldn't understand it."

"No," I said, "not all of it. Neither do your priests; no more do I; but I understand the simple things in it, and so may you. You understand your morning paper. Read your Bible in plain English, and follow that."

Said Jim, "I believe I will."

Finally I asked, "How long have you had so serious views of these religious matters?"

"Oh," said he, "more or less always."

"More or less," I said; "there has been some crisis in your life when apart from priests and ceremonies of every kind, you turned to God in some earnest way for yourself, with no priest but Christ. Tell me now honestly."

"Well," said he, "if you must know, it was when I was sick in Chicago, in a hospital, and thought I would die."

"Then you gave up your heart and all to Christ, and He received you."

"That's it," he said.

And so, observe I had found one of Christ's sheep, not of our ecclesiastical fold at all, but really a sincere follower of the true Shepherd starving for sympathy, for some one to confide in, whom he could trust. He had come to a real confessional, of which the formal thing is often a farce and a travesty. In my conviction, all the priests in the world could not

have broken the bond formed between him and me that day in our fellowship beneath those trees. After prayer which we had together, as Jim rose to go, he inquired, "When shall I see you again, I would like to talk some more."

"Well," I said, "I go to-morrow. You must read your Bible for yourself, and talk to Christ."

I have never seen him since, but I am sure a soul was put on the clue to a larger and deeper realization of divine things, than it had previously known. We had got clean off partisan, sectarian ground. As I have thought the thing over again and again since, I cannot resist the persuasion that that which made all those confidences possible was the simple evidence of sympathy Jim found that day when a stranger concerned himself lest he should suffer injury as he lay in the trench, and helped him to believe that his hard and unrecognized toil was after all appreciated by Christ. I long since found it was a tactical mistake to antagonize men on the side of their religious prepossessions.

It is not the first business of the Christian teacher to furnish men with a creedal religion ready-made,—but rather to put and keep men on the clue, as we have called it, wherein under the tuition of the Spirit they themselves will discover the truth they need.[1]

[1] Several paragraphs in this chapter are quoted substantially from a paper given by the author before the Congress of Arts and

The wise teacher will point out the next step, and then the successive steps towards the experimental knowledge of Christ Himself, leaving the philosophy about Christ to come in later. There is a place for this philosophy, for theology, but this place is secondary. Christ is always within personal touch of every soul, because God's love is so all-embracing, even though the soul does not realize it. By pressing our theological opinions inopportunely, we may create or widen a breach between the soul and Christ when we should abolish it. The real touch with Christ is realized through the adoption of the right personal attitude to the ideal one really has. The Bible calls this ideal "The Word," or that "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," [1] "the essential Christ," the omnipresent Redeemer.

To assume a willing attitude to one's ideal is faith, a faith always morally, rather than intellectually, conditioned. Our will has no power of itself to realize the essential Christ to the soul. The will, however, can annul the practical living lie which controls the life in its self-will, and the moment this is done, the Spirit of Christ rushes unsolicited to the soul's confessed helplessness and effects faith in Him. As na-

Sciences at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, on Comparative Religion, and published in the report of that Congress.

[1] John 1 : 9.

ture abhors a vacuum, so the moment in the light one has, the self-will endeavours to vacate the heart's throne that moment the Spirit of Christ with infinite pressure rushes in to fill the vacuum. God's interest in conferring grace is infinitely greater than man's in seeking it.

Says Dr. Cremer: "The wondrous counter-effect of God against man's sin is indeed a supernatural thing,—the absolutely inconceivable to human philosophy; it is different from anything which elsewhere or otherwise ever takes place, or can take place." This is the interior, profound reality in the Christian religion.

Now, assuming that this initiative of Christian experience which we have called the entrance on the clue to the experimental realization of the Christ, has taken place, Christianity depends for its deeper intellectual apprehension of what has occurred, upon the after-effect of such an experience, as the mind, like a waking dreamer, is prepared to cast its eye backward, and reviews in the light of the Bible the track over which the soul has come. At this point, the Holy Scriptures enter with measureless value, to bring out into consciousness, to explain to the understanding, the profound realization which has occurred, as well as to afford a basis on which further subjective experiences may be wrought. Here is the true, the indispensable place for objective truth.

Then this loyalty to light which Christianity so values, receives from its divine author various forms and degrees of attestation. This attestation will come to him who responds to the light of nature, although in a different degree, and with less assurance, as really as to him who follows the light of revelation, because the God of nature and of revelation are one and the same being. Christ speaks as really in the voice of natural conscience as in His written word,[1] because the conscience with all other created things is constructed "through" Christ,[2] according to Christ, with reference to Christ, the true norm of creation. The conscience indeed, as well as other powers of the natural man, is fallen, and needs to be renewed by the influence of the written word. The voice of Christ, however, yet speaks in the conscience, however obscurely ; and to obey that conscience, is of the spirit of faith, albeit it needs continual enlightenment from the Bible.

It is the embarrassment of current Christianity that by so many it is still supposed that the realities of Christian faith and experience in themselves are coterminous with the limited diffusion of the Scriptures —that in themselves faith and experience cannot exist except where the knowledge of the Bible exists. To this extent Christianity has narrowly and mistakenly alienated from itself much territory which

[1] Rom. 2: 14–16. [2] John 1 : 3.

really belongs to it—a domain which is its birthright. Christian revelation *brings to light* what *is*,[1] in the spiritual realm; for example, life and immortality, the love of God in Christ, the suspended judgment for sin, etc., etc., but the *existence* of all these was before revelation, and independent of their explanation in the Bible. It is of the realities, and not of the explanation of them, we now speak. "In the beginning *was* the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."[2]

Says Paul in his letter to the Romans, "But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus; say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down) or who shall descend into the abyss (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) but what saith it? The word is *nigh* thee—(that is, the ideal is nigh thee)—*in thy mouth* and *in thy heart; that* is the *word of faith* which we *preach*."[3] The word, or ideal, of faith which *is*, is such a thing as in itself may exist unexplained—perhaps fantastically or ignorantly held;—the word of faith *which we preach* is the same reality receiving a rational *Biblical explanation*. Because the Holy Spirit has gone before him, this essential faith is to be sought for by the missionary, in however slight degree, immediately, everywhere and in all men, and where found, always

[1] Eph. 3 : 9. [2] John 1 : 1.
[3] Rom. 10 : 6–8.

encouraged, and fed with revealed truth. This is the missionary's true place of beginning with the pagan mind, everywhere. He is to find the handle of the soul, take hold of it and direct it to God. Such is the practical, already existent basis which as co-workers with God we have everywhere in God's world.

It will be remembered that in the account of David Brainerd's work among the Delaware Indians, he speaks of a remarkable priest or reformer who had been "strangely moved to devote his life to an endeavour to restore the ancient religion of the Indians." He was grotesquely dressed in Indian fashion, but he was evidently devout. He lamented freely the degenerate condition of the Indians, and said that "their ignorance and wickedness had so troubled him sometimes that he had felt driven to the woods" in the solitariness of his distress for them. At length, he said, "God comforted his heart," and showed him that he should not so withdraw himself, but should return to his associates and love and labour for them as never before. While Brainerd was discoursing with him at times he would say, "Now that I like, so God taught me." Brainerd testifies that this man was sincere, honest and conscientious, according to his own religious opinions, as no other pagan he had seen. He laboured earnestly to banish the drinking habit from the Indians; but by his followers for the

most part, he was regarded as "a precise zealot," and his efforts were unwelcome. It would thus appear that in the heart of this nature-taught savage, was the spirit of faith existing with most limited light. It needed further instruction to give it such form and power as would enable it to grasp the large concept of "salvation"—assured salvation for himself and others;[1] but the germ in "the righteousness of faith" evidently was there, before the missionary with his message came. The man was not "living up to" his light, as no man does; but he was *walking in* his light; that is, he may have been in the spirit of a penitent and believer; he probably was. It was the function of the missionary to develop that germinal faith, that it might grow to intelligence and power. How far even Brainerd did this we are not told. Doubtless multitudes of instances, among so-called heathen peoples similar to this exist, and they are coming to be better known than formerly. This is evidence of the *at-homeness* of Christianity, among all men, everywhere. Christianity in fact is a religion which cannot be apprehended by the intellect alone, but requires for its realization the right use of other faculties of the soul as well, such as the con-

[1] Rom. 10:10. Note the distinction implied between "unto righteousness," and "unto salvation"; the latter term seems to have the force of *assured, conscious salvation*, in order to which the *preached word* is necessary.

science, the feelings, the imagination—and above all, the will. And all these acts pagans can exercise, with the very dimmest intellectual light. There is need that the entire composite soul be open. Even the living God cannot authenticate Himself as He desires to the mere fragment of personality, albeit that fragment were the majestic reason. In the mere action of the understanding, the executive soul puts itself *outside* the truth, and simply speculates upon it. One needs to move by an act of will *inside* the *truth* with all the love of the heart, and with all the moral sense of the conscience. He who does this touches reality. The agnosticism of the world is only the outcome of a mistaken intellectual self-sufficiency, a species of intellect worship.

It will be recalled that George J. Romanes, long a devoted disciple of Charles Darwin, when he returned to Christian faith after a long period of agnostic doubt, reproached himself for what he called "sins of the intellect, mental errors and undue regard for intellectual supremacy." Romanes thus clearly saw the principle which we have above enunciated, that faith in the Christian sense is essentially a right attitude of personality to the light one has, whatever its degree. It could not be otherwise than that one who previously closed so many avenues of the soul in the interests of intellectual supremacy should have, for a time, blindly missed the way to God. It is precisely

such blindness of heart that our Lord had in mind when He said: "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."[1] The essential difference in habit of mind between a child and a mere creature of intellectual prudence is this, that the child allows its whole composite being to act and the philosopher does not.

Now Christianity risks everything as to its acceptance or rejection, with him who will put its proposals to the experimental test. Said Jesus to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing."[2] So in principle He ever says: "Try Me and see if I am not what I claim to be."

The method of Christianity corresponds to the laboratory method of modern science. When it can have its way it puts the inquirer into the laboratory and it says: "There are the chemicals, the test tubes, crucibles, dynamos, etc.; now by personal executive acts enter into relations with the Lord of nature, put Him to the test with these implements, and get your experienced results. When one passes through such a scientific school he becomes an expert; that is one experienced in what is called "in-

[1] Matt. 11 : 25. [2] John 20 : 27.

ductive science," and so also Christianity through experience reaches assured conclusions which shine in a peculiar divine light. As between God and man there are two correlative movements: the man movement Godward and the God movement manward. The point at which these meet and coalesce is faith. It is here that salvation is wrought, a matter quite above the realm of mere ethics, a concept peculiar to the Bible, and often quite missed by non-evangelicals. The distinctive element in evangelicalism, viz., the effectual working of the divine grace upon the penitent but believing human soul is left out. Without this divine operation, there is nothing left for the soul but its helpless human fluttering against the bars of its own cage; there is no salvation possible worthy of the name. This downcoming of the grace of God always hidden from view, upon the soul following the proper clue at some moment of crisis, is the vital thing. The soul finds a Saviour; but what is far greater, the Saviour finds a soul; and this latter is the profounder element in the transaction, the divine part in it; that which makes it saving and transforming. The sooner the soul can be brought to perceive by faith this outreach of the divine embrace after it, the better; and the more strongly the soul-winner can realize the divine aspect of the new possibility in Christ, the greater will be his power to start the lost homeward.

V

TACT IN PERSONAL APPROACH

And I will make you to become fishers of men.—*Mark* 1 : 17.

A MATTER of very great importance in dealing successfully with souls is to know how to find the right angle of approach, so as really to commend our message. One of the best illustrations I have known came to me some years ago, in an address given by Dr. R. A. Hume, one of the most skillful of missionaries to India.

In one of the departmental meetings at the great Students' Conference in Detroit, Dr. Hume was discoursing on method. He was making the point that if we would secure entrance for our message on the part of the religionists of Asia, for example, the Hindus, we must endeavour to put in place of their superstition, a solid reason for any change we urge upon them, and we should always be sympathetic, and never, under any circumstances antagonize them. Then Dr. Hume proceeded about as follows:

"Suppose I am in India. I come out of my bungalow in the early morning, and I see a poor

pariah Hindu with whom, perhaps, I have had a slight acquaintance, coming along the road leading a goat, with a red band about its horns. I know perfectly well what it all means, but I approach my friend and say pleasantly,

"'Good-morning, my friend, where are you going with the goat?'

"'Oh, I am going to the temple.'

"'Indeed. May I go with you?'

"'What!' says the simple-hearted man. 'Do you wish to go to the temple?'

"'Certainly I do.'

"'Very well, then, come along.'"

The missionary further queries: "'And what are you going to do with the goat, my friend, when you get to the temple?'

"'Oh,' says the man, somewhat hesitant, "'the goat is to be killed; I am going to sacrifice him.'

"'Indeed,' I reply, 'and why, Mr. So-and-So, do you kill the goat?'

"'I don't know.'

"'You don't know! Surely you must have some reason for it.'

"'I don't know any reason.'

"'But you must have some reason.'

"'No, none that I can think of. It's our custom,' throwing his thumb over his shoulder, as if pointing to the past; 'it's our custom; my fathers did it.'

"'But you must have some reason for killing the goat.'

"'I do not know any.'

"'Is it because there is some sense of wrong, of sin in your heart and life, and you feel that something must die to satisfy it?'

"'I don't know, sir, *you know!*'

"'Well, then, why do you have a red band around the horns of the goat? Why not a white band, or a black one?'

"Again he answers: 'I don't know, sir; it's our custom; our fathers did it.'

"'It must be for some reason.'

"'I cannot think of any; it's our custom.'

"'Well, then, is it because the red band is the same colour as the blood of the goat that is to be slain?'

"'I don't know. *You know!*'"

(Observe how the man's confidence is growing in the sympathy and wisdom of his missionary questioner.)

"'And do you know, Mr. So-and-So, where this custom of sacrificing beasts originated?'

"'Oh, no,' says the Hindu, 'I don't know; nobody does. It has existed for ages. Nobody knows.'

"'Excuse me,' I reply; 'I know where it originated, and this is why I have come from

America to live in India, to tell you and your people about it.' "

From this beginning the missionary, in the simplest and most interesting way possible, tells the varied story of the early sacrifices recorded in the Scriptures from Abel down to the present time, and then going back over the ground, he shows him the insufficiency of animal sacrifice of every sort, explains how the poor human heart has ever sought to express itself thus, because it has a deep sense of distance from God, and of the certain penalty that must follow sin.

And then taking up another line, the missionary explains how God, from the beginning, has ever looked with pity and compassion on the unsatisfactory efforts of men of all times and countries to make sacrifices for themselves; and knowing that they never would succeed, He Himself, from the beginning, from before the creation of the world, so loved the world as to suffer infinite pain with it and hence gave His only begotten Son as the consummate expression of that suffering with and for it, that whosoever believeth on Him might have everlasting life. Thus, for the first time, the poor, ignorant, superstitious Hindu has found a man, a stranger from another country, who has helped him to understand his own poor, crude system of religion better than he himself understands it; and the man begins, through his own poor religion, to find his way to "the Lamb

of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." [1] Of course the missionary has brought his acquaintance into sympathy with himself, and gained a strong moral grip on him.

By this time they have reached the temple, and meeting the priest, the missionary explains to him how he happened to come to the temple, and goes over a similar process with the priest, nor does he finish until he has taken the remnant of truth, the scarlet thread, even in the Hindu religion and made it a channel through which to convey to the priest also the same rich and divine gospel. He has antagonized neither of them; he has come into close quarters with them; he has given reasons where they had nothing but blind custom; and from the shadow he has deduced the substance of the final and universal religion for all men.

Often we have wondered, as we have recalled that simple but telling narrative by Dr. Hume,[2] if missionaries among pagans generally, have discovered the true angle of approach, so as to be really "fishers of men." This spiritual tact is the supreme human qualification for catching men.

[1] John 1 : 29.

[2] Another fine instance of Dr. Hume's great tactfulness in dealing with the Hindu mind is given in the last chapter of his recent book, "Missions from the Modern View," published by Revell.

The personal equation as between man and man, is always a differing factor, and no two men will use precisely the same method, or adopt the same tactics. One's inventiveness in the circumstances in which he finds himself, and one's knowledge of the habits of mind of the people among whom he labours, will always have much to do with the matter; and of course the special Spirit's guidance is always supremely needed. What we are now urging however, is, that this matter of personal approach should be carefully studied and cultivated. At the basis of peculiar skill in this line of things is the spirit of a divinely begotten love; the love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,"[1] the love which never seeks to win a victory in argument over another, for the victory's sake; but rather tries to make another's difficulty one's own and to help him out of it; it yearns to impart all that is best in itself to one's fellow.

In my first pastorate in Illinois, which was blessed with many striking conversions, the following occurred: One day, while I was sitting in a barber's chair in a shop of the town, a man of uncouth appearance and great recklessness entered and began to talk very loud upon some subject that had irritated him, punctuating his excited remarks with shocking oaths. One of the barbers tried by signs to silence

[1] 1 Cor. 13:7.

him, indicating that a minister was in the chair to whom profanity was offensive. At this the man became even more profane and vociferous. I paid no attention to it except to note the features of the man.

A week or two afterwards I had occasion to visit a large carpenter shop to request the use of some tools that I might shave out a new handle for my hatchet. I was made welcome to a bench and some tools, pulled off my coat and went to work. Not long after the man whom I had seen in the barber shop, who, it seems, had a bench in the same establishment, came in. He observed me at work, and I recognized him, but for a moment nothing was said. Soon after I noticed that this man was watching my movements. He finally gathered courage to approach and remarked:

"Well, it seems that some preachers can do somethin' besides preach."

I replied pleasantly, "Yes, I can shave out a hatchet handle. I was brought up to use tools," and I went on finishing my work. After a time the man came around again and said:

"Well, that is pretty good; it's a fine job."

I replied, "Well, it will do."

Having finished my work, I turned to the several workmen, thanked them for the use of the tools and the courtesies of the shop, and added:

"Gentlemen, my shop's open on Sundays on the

corner of Third and State Streets. Come around and use my bench and see how the tools work ; you'll all be welcome."

"Well," responded my softening townsman of the barber-shop episode, "I would like to see your bench and how your tools work. I may come."

"I'll look for you," I answered, and with a warm hand-shake, I departed.

It was not long after, that one Sunday night, this man appeared in the church with his wife and two daughters, and was seated well up towards the front of the room. I proceeded with the service with an uncommon sense of actual business on hand. The meeting drew to a close. Meanwhile my friend, I observed, was not a little interested in the line of thought I had been following. After the benediction, in a moment I was at his side, expressing pleasure at seeing him in the church and inquiring if this was his wife beside him and if these were his daughters, and inviting them to come again and come regularly if they had no other place of worship.

He thanked me and then returned the compliment by saying :

"Would not you and your woman call on us sometime?" And then, improving upon that, he turned to his wife and said :

"Wife, why can't we have the elder and his woman to tea some evening?"

"With pleasure," she replied, and with a feeling which I thought I understood.

I answered: "Name the evening, and we will be there."

The date was fixed on the spot and a few evenings after my wife and I found ourselves at the table, in a comfortable home that evidently had been put in unusual order for our reception, and the table was laden with dainties.

We chatted away pleasantly through the meal, and at the close my friend turned to me and said:

"Now the supper is over, and I suggest that your woman and mine remain here to visit, while you and I go into the parlour by ourselves."

We went in and sat down, and then began the narration of a story that surprised me beyond measure. It was to this effect.

In years gone by this man and his wife had been happy members of a particular church in that town. All went well until some trouble arose and a party developed unfriendly to the pastor; sentiment was divided and the minister, to whom this man was deeply attached, was required to leave the field, to the great distress of many devoted parishioners.

"Then," said the man, "I grew angry at that and I left the church, and I got out into the world and I found wrong companions and I got to drinking, and things went from bad to worse until I became the

godless wretch you heard blaspheming the other day in the barber shop. I am ashamed, and I wish I could get back to the old times."

Well, of course I was not slow in showing sympathy for such a state of mind. Enough to say that that man and his wife and three daughters, ere many weeks, were gathered into our church fold. The last I saw of the old man when I visited the town years afterwards, he had become a cripple, hobbling about on crutches; and as I crossed the street to greet him he recognized my features and invoked a blessing on my head for my gentle dealing with him in the earlier times, and leading him back to the Lord from whom he had wandered. With moistened eyes he said he was looking forward to the next life with a radiant hope. Of course it would have been easy on the first occasion I met him to upbraid and perhaps quarrel with the man for his profanity, or to reason "that man is beyond reach"; but there was a better way; there always is.

In that same town I was enabled to get hold of a high-spirited but intemperate man, when all other efforts had failed, by taking him into my buggy one evening when I found him with unsteady steps staggering on the street and driving him to his home a mile away. I saw him safely inside the door with my best wishes to himself and wife. I did not immediately see him rescued from his habits, but some time

after I had left the town, in a marked revival which occurred, this same man one night rose in a great public meeting, and testified to the circumstance of my picking him up off the street and carrying him home. He went on to say that he never had been able to shake off the impression of brotherliness thus made upon him, and he came into a new life therefrom. Of course the last thing he needed from me was a lecture on temperance; he needed rather what Joel Stratton gave to John B. Gough as a broken young man in Worcester, Mass., the touch of a brother's hand on his shoulder, at a time when it was easy for others to scorn him. The winner of souls must find the way to impart that touch; it will be found only as a real love for the one sought springs up; and this the Divine Spirit must create. He often will create it if there is a consuming desire to bless another. This divinely wrought inventiveness—this ingenuity in getting at men in an original way, is one of the best gifts of the soul winner. No rules can be given for its exercise; each must develop it for himself in original touch with the soul through Christ.

While travelling in Japan in 1890, I fell in with a very interesting native. He was living in a monastery with several Buddhist priests, teaching them the English language, and also was devoting a part of his time to teaching Japanese to some American missionaries. He had read the Bible throughout, but prob-

ably self-interest held him to Buddhism. During two interviews with him I pressed upon him the immediate acceptance of Christ. He pleaded for more time in which to *study* Christianity. I urged that he did not need to study it more in order to become a Christian; that he should give his heart to Christ at once, on the present light he had, and then he could go on studying Christianity throughout his life. He was so impressed that he came to call on me in the home of one of the missionaries the afternoon on which I was to sail for China. We had but an hour or so to be together, and I pressed him strongly to settle his personal relation to Christ before I left. He was expressing to me his great surprise that a stranger, just passing through his country, should feel so deep an interest in him, and he wished me to explain it. I answered, "It was the Christ in me that explained it." He protested to me that he was not worthy of so much attention, and he wondered that I was so urgent.

"Why do you wish me to decide so soon?" he queried.

I answered, "I must do my missionary work as I pass. I cannot remain for years, as the resident missionaries here do, but must do my work while on the wing, and for the brief time I am with you I am a missionary, and I must now press upon you the claims

of my Master and yours. 'Now is the accepted time.'" [1]

"But," he said, "Mr. Mabie, this is so sudden."

"But," I replied, "it is none too sudden. You understand perfectly what Christ has done for your salvation and it only remains for you, by one decisive act, to accept it, and then go to work to save others."

At length, finding himself so closely pressed, he made a sudden bid for time by thrusting at me a speculative question. "But," said he, "what do you think of Buddha? You know we Japanese are largely Buddhists."

Discerning his tactics, for I saw he wished to draw me into discussion, I was careful to disappoint what he expected, viz.: that I would put contempt upon Buddha; for he had been told, as many another Buddhist unfortunately has been told, that his Buddha "is in perdition." Now had I fallen into this snare, either of declaring Buddha's destiny or of stopping to argue about it, I would have lost my friend's respect. Instead thereof, I felt moved to answer thus:

"But this is no time for you to be seeking refuge from your conscience by hiding behind Buddha. Beside, Buddha is the last person in the universe who you can hope will screen you in the last day.

[1] 2 Cor. 6:2.

You forget that Buddha never heard of Christ; he never had a Bible; he never met a Christian missionary, and yet you have read the Bible through. You know all about the Christ. If you were in dead earnest, and every missionary withdrew from the land to-day, you have light enough for Japan's evangelization, and God holds you responsible for a large part in it."

I continued: "Assuming that Buddha was the morally earnest man he is said to have been, if he had had one hundredth part of the light you have concerning God and Christ, instead of filling India, China and Japan with mere Buddhism, we might believe long ere this he would have practically Christianized half Asia. In the judgment day Buddha will be a swift witness against you. He will ask why, with all the Christian light you had, you did not at once accept Christianity and become the most ardent evangelist in this empire. You need not think that Buddha will ever justify you in vacillation concerning Jesus Christ."

The young man winced under the unexpected turn, and with real tremor of conviction, he asked:

"What, then, must I do?" I answered:

"Kneel with me here on the spot, and surrender your whole heart and life to Christ, who, you well know, has been long waiting to receive you. Act on

the light you have, a light that Buddha never had, and do it now."

"Well," he answered, "I am ready;" and kneeling there with me, he gave himself up, heart and soul, to Jesus Christ. Weeks afterwards he wrote me about his Christian baptism and of his efforts to tell the gospel to others.

It would have been easy at the critical moment for this man to be diverted into questions of speculation and debate, and thus have been hindered, rather than helped. But just how similar cases that may arise with their varying objections and attempts to evade the claims of Christ, are to be dealt with, is a matter that must be determined in each instance by itself, with all the tact that one can command, illumined by the Spirit of God.

A single false step at such a crisis may open or close the gateway of life forever.

It is sometimes too easily conceded that we can scarcely expect men in advanced years to change their religious attitude. We are persuaded that this is a grievous, practical error. In such cases, as in all others, much depends on the skill of the worker either to disappoint prejudice or to place himself positively *en rapport* with the soul he would win.

In one of my pastoral rounds one day, I dropped in upon a man past sixty years of age who was known as a very skillful blacksmith of the town, an

artist in his line, a man of rare keenness of mind, very opinionated and religiously cynical. I had previously been warned that a call upon him would probably result similarly to an approach to a rabid dog. However, I nerved up and entered the shop. I introduced myself and explained that I was making acquaintances in the new parish and I dropped in to see him. He knew but little of me except that I was a newly arrived stripling of a minister. He replied by saying he pitied me with the job I had; to bring into line a church made up of such doubtful timber as I had in hand.

"Oh," I said, "there are some pretty good people in that church, better than we think."

"No, they are a bad lot and they've been divided; you have a tough job."

"Well, now," I replied, "perhaps it would be wiser to look on the other side a part of the time; then besides, it is the easiest thing in the world to find fault with anybody. There are no perfect people in the world."

"Well, but, there is no help for those people of yours."

I answered, "Now, see here, you are a man of brains and intelligence, but it takes no brain at all to find faults in other people. I see you are working out a lot of fine wheel coulters (referring to attachments used on the farmer's plough for cutting the sod

in front of the mould-board). Now I could not make one of those coulters for my life, but I think I could find fault with one of them if the disc was not perfect or its set on the plough was badly adjusted." The man, surprised that I knew anything about coulters and ploughs looked up and said, "What do you know about ploughing?"

I replied, "I was brought up at that business. I suppose, young as I am, I have ploughed more furrows than you have made coulters."

"Oh, I thought you were a kind of kid-gloved minister."

"No! no matter about that, let's stick to my point. I could easily criticise coulters, though I could not possibly make one. It takes hard work to hammer out steel coulters, and it isn't easy to make good Christians in a church like mine; but both of these things are worth doing and doing well."

"Very likely," he replied, "I like that talk; I guess you are right. Anybody can find fault," and then he added: "But there is one thing, elder, that nobody can find any fault with."

I asked, "What's that?"

"Oh, that life of Jesus Christ."

"Good," I said; "I am going to talk on that subject Sunday night. Won't you come around and hear me?"

"I have not been to church much late years, but I

believe I will come and see if you know as much about preaching as you do about ploughing."

"All right," and having got him into a good mood, I said, "Good-afternoon," and left him.

He was at church the next Sunday evening in the front seat, and some of my people stared to see that man in so close quarters with the pulpit. I called again the following Monday and thanked him for coming, found he was pleased, and in a greatly altered state of mind. Soon, I got near enough to extract from him the story of his early life "way down East in Vermont" when he believed Christianity, before the wave of spiritualism struck the town, and swept him into superstition for a time, and finally left him morally cheated out of confidence in any religion whatever, until now he lay stranded like an old hulk upon the beach.

He admitted he was not satisfied, that there must be something better, and he gave me a chance to help him. In a few weeks he came to the church, recounted the story of his life and closed with a testimony of experience of the Christ of the gospels within his heart. The church received him and shortly afterwards we gathered in also his two daughters and that family was reclaimed from the ranks of non-church-goers and non-believers.

We often give up such people too easily under the influence of current impressions given out by people

who take men at their worst, and we really make no earnest effort to get at their better side.

Take another case; in that same pastorate, I felt strangely moved one winter, to go out into a country district and preach every night for three weeks, in a schoolhouse, and meanwhile, visit every family within the township in the hope that there might be found some who would consent to be shepherded.

It was a period of tramping about, day after day, from farmhouse to farmhouse through the slush of melting snows, taking meals where I was invited, spending the night in farmhouses to which they made me welcome, and preaching every evening in the schoolhouse.

On my journey out the first evening I called at the home of one of the strongest characters in the whole region. He had been a brickmaker and had accumulated property; had two grown sons of whom he was very proud; one of whom was the first candidate I had baptized. This man and his wife were about seventy years of age. The afternoon I called the wife only was in. I explained my errand, telling her of my purpose to preach every night in their schoolhouse and inviting them to come. It seems that after I had gone the wife, not herself a professing Christian, said to her husband, on his return home:

"Husband, what do you think? Mr. Mabie has

been here, and he says he is going to preach every night in our schoolhouse for the next three weeks and I think we ought to go to the meetings. This is our chance."

"Just as you say," responded he.

Well, the meetings proceeded from night to night. I was much at home amongst them for I, myself, had been reared among farmers, and knew their habits and could help them with the chores on occasions, and understood many features of their monotonous life.

One night when the meetings were well under way, I preached upon the text: "I will pay Thee my vows which my lips have uttered and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble." [1] In my discourse, I spoke as concretely as possible; using illustrations from men in various situations of peril or in crises of business in which they almost universally make vows to God while the difficulty lasts, and then when the trouble is over, easily forget their vows. In conclusion, I pleaded as strongly as I was able that my hearers would pay those vows, which God knew they had made; which they knew they had made and which were long overdue.

It was a meeting of great solemnity. At the close of the service, as I was shaking hands with the people on all sides, my old friend, the aforesaid brick-

[1] Ps. 66 : 13, 14.

maker, tapped me on the shoulder, turned me round, and said:

"Elder, you are going home with us to-night."

I said: "All right, Mr. R., I am boarding on the town."

We soon found ourselves in the long wagon, filled with various friends from his part of the neighbourhood. The old gentleman sat on the front seat carrying a lantern, while a young man drove. I sat directly behind him. We had no sooner started on the way than the old man turned round, slapped me on the knee, and said:

"Elder, this is like old times!"

"Old times!" I said to myself: "this man has a religious history covered up somewhere behind him!"

Little more was said until we reached his home a mile distant. We entered the house in perfect silence. He stirred up the fire, drew up some chairs and said to me:

"Now we'll sit down here and have a little talk. I have quite a story to tell you. My wife can sit up and hear it or not just as she pleases. Your words to-night and your visit to this neighbourhood among us old, hard-hearted sinners compel me to tell you what I have never told any one before."

The man then began from the time when he was a ten year old boy and his mother had been taken away by death, and he was left alone, and told me a

story of period after period in his life when he had vowed to God, and had never paid. After his mother's death, he had lived a life of prayer for some time, but never got courage to profess his faith. He grew to manhood and migrated to Illinois; meanwhile vowing to God that if He would give him a good "government claim" in the new region he then would acknowledge God and join the church; but the vow was unpaid.

He then gave an account of the time when, in 1849, the California "gold-fever" broke out, and he started for the Pacific slope. He told of driving from northern Illinois to St. Louis, Mo., of taking a steamer up the river to St. Joseph; of the breaking out of cholera on board and men dying at frequent intervals during the night. Every half-hour the steamer would draw to shore; a man would be buried in the sand, and then they would move on until another burial was necessary. So, for many hours, this continued, the young man, in his berth, meanwhile praying and vowing that if God would spare him from cholera, then he would pay; but again he would forget. He crossed the plains, often threatened by raids of wild Indians, vowing as he journeyed. He went into the mines in the Golden State, vowing day by day, and week by week, to pay if God would prosper him in his "finds." These vows too were unpaid. The time came when he turned homeward, by way of the

Isthmus to his family with a certain amount of "dust" which he had gathered, and again he vowed if God would give him a prosperous voyage, then he would serve the Lord, set up family worship, etc. The poor old unseaworthy vessel in which he shipped found itself driven by storm, hundreds of miles away from its course in the South Pacific, and then it became becalmed for weeks together ; the scurvy broke out ; men died daily ; he too sickened and thought he would die. He was nursed by a poor hunchbacked cripple who was a Christian and devoted himself to his care. During all this experience he prayed and vowed, and vowed again, but nothing came of it. At length the hunchback nurse himself sickened and died, and as his body was about to be thrown into the sea, the captain of the ship, before the plank was tilted, asked if there was any one on board who would offer a prayer before the body was committed to the deep.

Said my friend : "That was my time. I owed my life to that hunchback who had died, but I hesitated. In my cowardice I refused. Just then," said he, "a black man, the cook of the ship, fell on his knees and prayed such a prayer as I have never heard before or since, and do you know," said he, "the Lord at that moment took away the gift that He intended I should have and exercise, and gave it to that black man, and to this day I have never been able to open

my mouth in a public prayer. I have vowed and vowed and yet have never paid.

"Finally," said he, "our vessel made its way to some port in Central America, at which I was landed, and I made my way through feverous and pestilential regions, step by step, to the northern states and reached my home and found my wife and child still preserved to me, and I, still recreant to my vows. And I have been recreant ever since."

And thus until two o'clock in the morning this man detailed his story, his wife meanwhile sitting in the corner of the room with her face buried in her apron, convulsed with emotion.

At length he concluded:

"Now I am ready to pay my neglected vows. I am ready to confess Christ before these neighbours of mine and before the church, and I want to be baptized, thus following that son of mine whom you recently took into your church, and whose position is a constant rebuke to me, his unworthy father."

Suffice it to say, the man and his wife both came out, throwing their whole souls into their profession of new life in Christ. It was one of the most thrilling narratives ever told me; and the whole event was so unexpected by the entire neighbourhood in which it occurred and by the church with which these friends united, that it was the talk of the place for years.

Oh, for the grace and guidance to find our way to

human hearts, young and old, in the depths of which great secrets are hidden, waiting for the person to whom they can be confidingly imparted. It is my decided conviction that if there were more Christians whose hearts were open to receive such confidences, God Himself would see that more people were brought to such confessions, even in advanced years.

VI

CHRIST'S METHOD OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

How then were thine eyes opened.—*John* 9 : 10.

In preceding chapters I have been dealing with the matter of evangelism broadly, and yet in many concrete forms illustrating what seem to me right methods of work in both Christian and pagan lands. The principle, of course, is the same anywhere and everywhere. In the present chapter I make special application to the matter of dealing with pagan minds on foreign mission fields.

In my wide travel in Asia some years ago, I came into close personal touch with missionaries of many denominations who were wrestling with this matter, seeking to find the angle of approach to Buddhist Confucian or Hindu heathen minds. In the midst of our common questionings and difficulties, which more than one missionary confessed were almost insoluble to him, I had opportunities to test this matter of method in ways which brought new illumination to me at least. I here give with some detail one striking example of a method used with a company of Brahmins which God seemed to bless.

While I was in the Telugu town of Ongole, South

India, I received one evening a visit of compliment from a company of these Brahmin gentlemen. Some of them were government officers, with English education, speaking well our language, and ready to talk on subjects of common interest. They bore personal testimony to the character of our missionaries among them, and begged us to enlarge our educational work in the town. The evening passed delightfully, and at the close of the interview one of the more sympathetic leaders of the company surprised me by asking if I would preach to them on the following Sabbath evening if they would come again. I accepted the invitation. Inquiring in my mind for a proper message, I was at length strongly drawn to the incident of Christ's healing of the man born blind, as told in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John, which sets forth with rare clearness Christ's method of kindling His own light in the soul.

Now Hindus are very fond of speculative talk; the more you argue with a Hindu Brahmin, the more you arouse his intellectual pride, and so the more completely you bar the way to a practical spiritual result. When Christ's method is resorted to, we find something better than argument, namely testimony, witness—that divine something appealing to the heart which shines in its own light. The Scripture passage which I selected for exposition affords a choice instance of the experimental method of testing truth,

whereby every seeker for light may ascertain for himself who the Christ is. I should say that on the previous night one of these Brahmins in conversation had said to me, "You must not think of us as worse than we are. In a sense we are believers in Christ. Christ is undoubtedly a great teacher, a prophet; only there are other prophets." And he added with characteristic Eastern self-satisfaction, "And they are also all Asiatics. There is Confucius, and Mahomet, and Buddha and Kapila, and others; but how shall we know that Jesus is more than these?" That question I felt compelled to answer. So when I came to my discourse I began by saying, "Gentlemen, Christ has given us a method whereby we may certainly know that He is more than other teachers. He stakes everything on one principle, uttered in this same gospel, 'If any man willeth *to do His will* he shall *know of the doctrine*, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.'" [1] I then proceeded to point out the rapid growth made by the blind man who was healed, in his progressive understanding of Jesus Christ, who had wrought the sign in him. First, he saw and described Him, as simply "The man called Jesus"; [2] then as "A prophet"; [3] then as the One "Sent from God" [4]—the Messiah; then as "Lord," [5]

[1] John 7:17.
[2] *Ibid.* 9:11.
[3] *Ibid.* 9:17.
[4] *Ibid.* 9:33.
[5] *Ibid.* 9:38.

whom he devoutly worshipped. This was indeed rapid growth in a unique school, very unlike progress reached through the merely didactic method. I then passed on to show that if we read between the lines in this story, we may find at least four definite principles on which the man acted in acquiring his vision: principles which are still operative.

The first principle is this: That in Christ's method there must be sufficient *humility* to allow Jesus to treat His subject as He will; to let Christ manage His case in His own way, however mysterious.

When Jesus smeared the plaster of clay on the sightless eyeballs of the wondering man he might have proudly resented such treatment. Had he been characterized by the average amount of pride which reigns in the human heart, he probably would have protested, "Do you propose to add insult to my injury by thus daubing my sightless eyeballs with that plaster of mud?" But he did not so. For some reason he was willing that Christ should have His own way with him; do as He pleased with him; put him in subjection to His own authority. Thus he welcomed any method which the mysterious sympathetic stranger cared to apply. How it was that this man was so tractable is worth inquiring. It is certainly uncommon, and the result was just as unique.

I once asked a good friend of mine, a quaint French brother, a man of much spiritual insight,

why he supposed Jesus put the clay upon the eyes of the man. "Oh," answered he, "I don't know, unless it made him a little more willing to go and wash." Possibly this was the reason. Our Lord by His providence often puts us into a position wherein, because of our new straits, we become willing to take some other needful step to extricate ourselves; and if it were not for the trial we would never get deliverance. The trial is the one circumstance indispensable to the winning of our consent to be led further in the way of the Lord's will. And so Jesus has a philosophy deeper than our metaphysics, a method unique, divinely wise. When once it is evident what Christ's will for us is, let us yield to it, purely on trust; and it won't be long before He will show us that He is more than Buddha, Mahomet or Confucius, more than all other masters.

A second principle in this experimental method of Christ to which I pointed the Brahmins was this; that he who would come into Christ's light must be *obedient* enough to act on His word. Real inward faith will ultimately act upon some divine word. I said to these Brahmins, "You say that Jesus is a teacher whom you revere. Do you enough revere Him to risk something by a line of action towards Him? If not, your reverence is fictitious. Do you believe that Christ is a prophet? Then trust Him sufficiently to take His directions; give reality to

His word. Risk your life upon such reality." After Christ had put the clay upon this man's eyes, He gave a word of command, "Now, go to yonder pool of Siloam, and wash it off." [1] Here the man might have said, "But, sir, you have just put the clay upon my eyes. Why now should I go to a distant pool to remove it?" But Jesus had some reason for the strange cleansing as well as for the peculiar anointing; some deep, divine reason that human philosophy could not fathom. The very meaning of the word "Siloam" is "sent"; it was an emblem of Jesus, the eternal fount of life, that flows right out from beneath the throne of God. Jesus Himself was "the sent" of God. And now He seems to say, "If you would be My disciple becoming willing to be sent by Me, just as I was sent by the Father. Act on My word; go and wash." The surprising thing is that the man did not hesitate to comply. He promptly started, groping his way down the vale, doubtless soliloquizing as he went, "That sympathetic teacher tells me to go, and I am going." He reaches the pool, he dips deeply into the brimming fount, washes, and lo, as he turns and lifts his cleansed eyes heavenward, there meets him a vision never seen before. There are the strange blue heavens, the walls of the Holy City, the Temple, the valley of the Kidron, the Mount of Olives, and

[1] John 9 ; 7.

moving companions all about him. How wondrous it all seems!

> "What a change His word can make,
> Turning darkness into day!"

To make this point clearer, I told the following incident of an occurrence in America. One evening there came to my inquiry meeting a bright young German. He had become very agnostic in his religious position, and yet he was so dissatisfied that he desired help. He told me his story about as follows: "I was brought up in Prussia. My father was a minister of the Established Church. The family régime was pretty rigid. I resisted and at length I broke away from it all, and came off to this New World, since which time, for five years, I have been falling away further and further from all I once believed, until I am afraid to go on."

I replied, "That's a good sign," adding, "But have you drifted so far away that you have no faith at all left?"

"Oh," said he, "I still believe some things."

"Will you, then, tell me some one thing which you still really believe? We'll not mind just now what you don't believe."

"Well," said he, "I still believe in God."

"That is a good deal to believe if it be really so.

But how much do you believe in Him? Do you believe enough to act on your belief?"

"A man ought to."

"Certainly. If one will not so act on his avowed belief, what do you think of him?"

He promptly replied, "He is a hypocrite."

"Well," said I, "he certainly is not candid, honest with himself. Now, on the basis of your own acknowledgment, I want you to do the simplest thing I can think of in the way of acting out your belief here and now."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to speak to God. Just talk to Him as you do to me."

"What, do you want me to pray? I can't make a prayer."

"Well, then, don't call it prayer, if that troubles you. But I want you to talk to God in your own way, and so prove the reality of your belief in Him. I do not ask you to make my prayer or anybody's else prayer. You could not if you tried; you do not need to; do your own praying with just your present notion of God. I wish you to risk yourself on the truth you now avow, to treat the measure of truth you hold as actual; nothing more and nothing less."

He answered, "I shall stammer badly, but what you ask is reasonable."

"Then," said I, "let us kneel down here."

We knelt together. First I prayed, and when I had finished I waited for him to follow. After quite a struggle, he broke out: "Oh, my God," and having gotten his voice, he went on step by step, pouring out a torrent of confession of his treatment of God, of his dear old father away in Germany, of the Bible and Christ, and begged for forgiveness, until suddenly springing to his feet, he exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Mabie, I feel wonderfully changed. Could you lend me a Bible? I am ashamed I don't own one. I will buy one to-morrow. I want to read the Bible." He longed for the biblical explanation of what had just occurred in his soul. The man was of course converted before he knew it, through simply acting on the measure of truth, however small, which he still cherished, and there came to his soul the sense of God, that amazing miracle of grace which is always wrought when a man honestly acts on the faith he has.

"So," turning to my Brahmin friends, I urged, "do as this man did. Act upon some simple reality concerning Christ, which you have already become aware of, in the Bible you have read; and you will soon know for yourselves yet deeper realities in the school of Christ."

The third principle discernible in the method of Christ which I urged upon the Brahmins, was this; the importance of *testimony* to the measure of faith

one has as fast as it comes. It was so that the healed man advanced so rapidly in the school of Christ. When he saw that Jesus was simply "The man called Jesus," he said so. When later he saw Him to be "A prophet," he confessed it. And when the divine Messiahship of Jesus broke upon him, he owned to that. Here, be it observed, was the particular crux of the situation. It was the last test on which everything turned with him. The moment the man confessed that Christ was "The sent of God, the Messiah," that moment the proud Sanhedrists thrust him out; because they had agreed among themselves "that if any man should confess Jesus to be the Christ, he should be cast out of the synagogue," [1] so out they thrust him, and there he stood in the environs of the Holy Place, suffering alone for his new confession of faith. What now happened? Two things that under similar conditions always occur. Jesus "heard it." Who told Him? A little before no man could find Jesus. But now, instantly, the crisis being on with a disciple, as a needle turns to the pole, Jesus perceives within Himself that there is a suffering follower of His thrown outside the synagogue, and He makes His way directly to him. And He "found him." [2] He always does; He always will, find the soul that feels itself, for His sake, most alone.

I was aware that at this point I was on delicate

[1] John 9 : 22. [2] John 9 : 35.

ground. For a Brahmin to incur the risk of being put out of the caste synagogue, which he would do if he confessed Christ, is to ask him to face the thing he most fears. If he breaks caste, his co-religionists will burn him in effigy in his native village; they will take away his wife, and reduce her to the abject condition of widowhood; and consider them both as the offscouring of the earth, the refuse of the universe. "But," I continued, "remember that, when this poor man once blind, found himself an outcast, then it was, in that very moment, that Jesus saw the crisis and responded to it. He 'found him'; stood right before him; and put to him the query, 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?'[1] Not before had Jesus put to His new disciple a question so theological. The man had not been ready for it before, but now, as a real pupil in Christ's school he is ready. The man replied, 'The Son of God! Who is He, sir, that I may believe on Him? I am disposed to believe anything good and great of this man called Jesus, this prophet, this Sent of God. Art Thou He, the Blessed Stranger, who didst give me sight? Who is this Son of God, that I may believe on Him? I will believe, the moment I can know who He is.'" Here is the real truth-lover, the real inquirer, the true pupil in God's school. Nothing less can come to such an one than the full sunrise upon the soul—

[1] John 9 : 35.

such a sunrise as broke upon the patriarch of old at "Peniel," meaning "the face of God." So Christ answers the whole-hearted query by saying, "The Son of God! Why, thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that talketh with thee; I am He." How otherwise could the man respond than to say, "Lord, I believe,"[1] and he worshipped Him. He is orthodox at last. "The man called Jesus" is now seen to be divine.

Such is the road to real orthodoxy, the experimental road, more direct than the speculative way. It may take one a lifetime to find the guide post even to the philosophical road; but coming to Jesus as we are, even though it be to become an outcast, we find it at once, and the work is done.

Some years ago in the West a brother minister of mine told me this story. Calling one day on a lady who was a member of his church, the woman's husband, who was not a member, came in and pleasantly saluting the pastor, said, "Doctor, we are very glad to see you in our home. My wife is a member of your church, but I am not. Indeed, there are many things in your creed I could not possibly accept, but I believe more than many people suppose." Replied the tactful pastor, "Would you kindly tell me plainly what you believe more than people suppose?"

"Oh, I believe that Jesus is the teacher, perhaps the greatest teacher the world ever saw."

[1] John 9 : 38.

"Do you really believe that?" asked the pastor.

"I do."

"Well, then," continued the pastor, "would you mind coming to our next prayer meeting, and telling us as much?"

"What! Think of my coming to a prayer meeting and doing that! Would you make a hypocrite of me? What would the Church people think?"

"Didn't you speak as an honest man, just now, when you said you believed more than people supposed, even that Jesus is the teacher? If you spoke honestly, as I believe you did, I cannot see how there could be any hypocrisy in telling it out among your neighbours and friends. I have heard you say it. Your wife heard it. I think it's down in the Book of Remembrance above. Why not let all men know it?"

"Well," said the man, "that's a new way of putting it. I'll think about it."

And think about it he did, and to so much purpose that he came to a mid-week meeting soon after, and at a fitting moment, arose and repeated the conversation, which the skillful pastor had had with him a few days previously. Then he added, "My friends, in thinking over this matter I find I believe a great deal more than I did when I met the pastor last. I then said I accept Jesus Christ as a great teacher. But I accept Him now as my teacher, and on the whole I accept Him as my Master and Saviour." The man

was practically converted on his feet. And he went out of that prayer meeting a changed man. Such doing of the truth is always true to Christ's method. This man might have sat down in a great library or in some lecture hall, with a lot of philosophical theorists and speculated endlessly, until his heart was hardened and his conscience seared and the light in him had become turned to darkness. But instead he took Christ's wiser, straighter, immediate method to the realization of who He was, and he came at once to "*know* Him."

The fourth principle in the method of Christ illustrated in the narrative, to which I directed my Brahmin hearers, was this: One must dare to *stand alone.* It takes some courage to do this. It is here chiefly that we break down. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." The world makes us cowards. Our family relatives render us craven. Our caste relations unman us. This man in the gospel, however ignorant or poor or blind he was, was not a coward. He dared to stand alone, absolutely alone. At a certain stage in the controversy between the Pharisees and the healed man, these proud religionists appealed to the parents of the man and said, "Is this your son?"

"Yes."

"Was he born blind?"

"He was."

"How is it that he now sees?"

"Oh, we don't know. He is of age; ask him." This they said because they feared the Jews. They forsook their unfortunate child, the last thing a true parent will do. I have heard of a mother who followed her son through crime, imprisonment and to the scaffold, and when afterwards he was buried in a Potter's field, she begged that she might be buried beside him. But on this occasion this Jewish mother, sustained by the father, neither of them fit to bear the title of parent, left the poor inquirer after Christ, whose eyes had been opened by His touch, whose inward soul had been illumined to the degree of prophet-hood, forsook him that was bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. For all they cared, they said, "let him be cast out of the synagogue." But the son wavered not. He reached out, believingly, in the uncertainty of an outcast condition, till Jesus came and found him. He knew the meaning of the psalmist's words, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." [1]

And so, to my Brahmin hearers I could not say less than this: "Should you be thrown out of your caste, in the process of discovering for yourselves who the Christ is, remember that to be *cast out* with Christ is to be *cast in* with God."

But I am asked, "What of the outcome?"

[1] Ps. 27 : 10.

Well, the very next morning, one of these Brahmins, an officer of the government, came to the mission house, begging to see me, and proceeded to say,

"Oh, sir, I thought I must see you this morning, almost before breakfast. I didn't sleep a wink last night."

I inquired, "Why not, Mr. R.?"

"Oh, that revelation of human nature contained in the chapter you expounded! I never saw it before, sir, on that fashion. Is it true, sir? Oh, is it true? Must I break my caste in order really to know who Christ is?"

"Well," I replied, "my brother, that man in the gospel indeed broke his caste. He went out of the synagogue alone, but he met the Christ at the exit. And you will, if you will be as brave as he. In any case, you must dare to stand alone if you would have Christ's full illumination."

"Oh, then," said he, "pray for me!"

We knelt together, and after I had prayed he followed me, in an outpouring of heart touching in the extreme. He pleaded with many tears that Christ would not let him die in his sins; that God would give him grace, even if his Hindu fellows cast him out forever. We had many words of sympathetic intercourse together, then and afterwards. He has since passed away, and I can only hope for a blessed outcome.

Then an hour afterwards there came a second Brahmin, a teacher in the high school, and he said,

"Oh, my dear sir, I had to see you also. I think I understand what you were talking about last night; but how can I know it better, be sure who Christ is, and come into a state of peace?"

Then he began to hedge and to draw back from any public acknowledgment of what he confessed to me.

"Well," I said, "you must take Christ's directions, and walk in the best light you have, no matter what it costs, or where it leads, and the light is certain."

I left him in India, struggling with that question. He, however, wrote me weeks afterwards, thanking me for the message of that evening, and begging for patience and prayers still. Then some months later, when Doctor Clough came to this country he told me that the old caste man who had conveyed the invitation that I should preach had just died a Christian's death, renouncing at the last Hinduism forever, and owning that he had long been a secret believer.

Thus among these Hindus, Christ set His seal upon His truth and honoured an exposition of His own method, giving some fruit, even among these Gentiles.

It is with me a profound conviction that as a

matter of method in some of the more primary stages of the foreign missionary's work among the heathen, relatively too much emphasis has been placed upon the mere matter of communicating a body of theological truth as such, and far too little use has been made of loyal action upon some one truth already known. In these later days of mission work when great numbers of people even in pagan lands have already single truths enough in mind to enable them to come into the realization of Christ, why not induce them immediately to act upon the light they have. It is not true that people in heathendom or elsewhere need to have before them a great variety of abstract theological truths before they can be spiritually renewed and become inducted into the school of Christ. It is amazing how little truth is essential to salvation. The missionary often can well afford to presume upon the fact that many all about him in regions where the gospel has been preached somewhat widely, already know enough to be saved. The practical thing needed is that by the help of the Spirit in some tactful way these should be led to commit themselves to the truth they know. To do this, is in principle faith, is the belief of the heart and the executive act of the entire soul. To those who will thus act, Christ Himself will lift the veil and through His own miracle, stand SELF-DISCLOSED.

VII

THE FIELDS WHITE UNTO HARVEST

"Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields that they are white already unto harvest."—*John* 4 : 35.

In the light of what has been said, doubtless the earnest reader has asked, "But how does this matter of personal effort for individuals bear on the larger problem of the salvation of the masses? How may the multitude in a given community be reached; a tribe of the heathen collectively be Christianized?"

These queries are most pertinent. As I have previously stated, it may not indeed be the province of all Christians, however earnest, to initiate great and successful general revivals. Nevertheless, such are the divine expectations respecting the prevalence of Christ's kingdom that we must believe in frequent and even sudden spiritual ingatherings throughout the Gospel era. Ours is the Jubilee age of the Gospel: the period distinctly set forth in the Scriptures as "the times of the Gentiles"; the time of world-wide witnessing.

There is always a close relation between the starting of one soul and the moving of a wide circle of souls Christward. In all the revivals I have ever

known a striking characteristic has been the manner in which one new convert has won others by a very contagion of new life. We can never tell how broad may be the sweep of the influence of one true convert. Krishna Pal's renewal in Serampore initiated a wide movement that continues in ever enlarging circles among the Hindus. When Ko Thah Byu in Burma, formerly a poor slave, became a Christian, it did not appear to signify, but it was the inception of the salvation of the Hill tribes of Burma by tens of thousands. More than four thousand converts from one tribe have been won to Christ within the past two years. The fragment of a tract which led Neesima to God became a myriad-tongued witness to all Japan.

Probably the most characteristic illusion of public Christian workers is the notion they commonly have that they must convert people by masses, through some stroke of genius in public discourse, or marked demonstration in organization. But thinking people are rarely converted *en grosse*, however differently it may appear. The very men reputed to have large, popular evangelizing power have at least had their introduction to such power in the practice of winning souls one by one in the secret places. This was peculiarly true of Mr. Moody. He was never above the work of constant, personal watching for inquirers. He probably conversed and prayed individually with

more persons than any man of his time. Dr. Torrey, Evan Roberts, and others, who of late have commanded much attention, have been foremost in enlisting many persons to bring their associates to public meetings, to labour with inquirers singly in inquiry meetings and elsewhere. The greatest evangelists confess themselves powerless without such reinforcement. There is no substitute for the one by one way. To save many, we must first save one. If the Church would bring about Hawaiian evangelization, it needs an Oo-Boo-Kiah as well as a Titus Coan for its initiation. If we would bring on the Telugu harvest, there must first be the Prayer-Meeting Hill incident with the Jewetts and two or three native believers in a peculiar and divine fellowship. The Pentecost on the Congo sprang from one repentant man under the story of the Cross as told by Henry Richards after years of almost fruitless work. A single trophy the converted "Africaner" brought to triumph a halting mission in South Africa. The amazing movement in Uganda at one time threatened with extinction even after Mackay's extraordinary apostolate, took on a new life after a few natives had become repentant after the awful atrocities perpetrated by King Mwanga. To-day fifty thousand of the Uganda people are discipled to Christ. The great movements in Manchuria, Korea, and the Philippine Islands, had their beginnings in a few native con-

verts. To convert one, therefore, may be to convert a thousand. The law of geometrical ratio prevails. The spark may kindle the forest,—a nation be "born in a day."

The works of Augustine and Columba, of Boniface and Ansgar, of Wesley and Whitefield, of Finney, Spurgeon and Moody, will be wrought over again and again in differing forms in enlarging spheres, as individuals being empowered by the Spirit of God impress their message first upon some one soul.

If in the defections from faith to rationalism, if through increase of worldliness and coldness in the church, there come times when men will say, "Alas! the great revivals are over"; yet in that very hour, there will be starting in some lad somewhere a new divine fire which will yet envelop a continent with the power of some long-forgotten divine message, and as under another Savonarola, potentates of the earth will be caused to tremble.

We should indeed remind ourselves that whatever be the means employed, all men will not believe the gospel and be saved. Even under Christ's personal ministry, this was true. "Behold this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed," was the testimony of the aged Simeon to Mary. The same gospel

which unto some is a "savour from life unto life," to others is a "savour from death unto death."

The Bible does not explain this and we cannot; sin whose climax is unbelief is in fact spiritual insanity. All faithful preaching of the gospel, even at its best, taking human nature as it is, will result in the hardening of some, and the melting of others. That risk all true labourers for Christ must assume, and leave the result with God. With this allowance, however, for the sad fact which any sound view of Christian evangelism must reckon upon, it is still true that Christ warrants the hope of large and not small fruitfulness to those who engage in His work.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

Referring to the results of His own reconciling death, which He deemed a planting rather than a burial, and the certain resurrection which attested its divine import, Christ said of the sequel, "It beareth much fruit." Then no one need be pessimistic respecting the avails of the travail of the Saviour's soul, if only the presentation of truth be rightly made, in the experience and power of it.

As an object lesson intended expressly to set forth the scale on which Christ expected results from gospel effort, He wrought the two miracles called "the supernatural draughts of fishes." What these signs

really meant to teach, however, was the *supernatural catch of human souls* that might be expected when the nets were cast according to His word. Of course, if efforts are made in some form of half-secularized endeavour, only failure can be expected. When the disciples after Christ's resurrection temporarily lost faith in any further divine manifestation of Himself, in impatient petulance they all joined with Peter and said, "I go a-fishing." Nothing short of a fresh epiphany of Himself rendered them again divinely effective.

There is on record in the Gospel of John one striking experience in the life of our Lord which is evidently intended to encourage His workers to expect large results in evangelism where there is the least promise of it. I refer to the event which occurred at Sychar, when the Saviour met the woman at the well and the revival in Samaria immediately ensued. This certainly was a most unexpected event, a sudden revival. No field apparently could have been more unpromising. The Samaritans were a community fairly insulated against Judaistic influence of any sort: prejudice was strong and bitter, as between this half-heathen community and the holy city of Jerusalem. Now there must be a real philosophy at the basis of the extraordinary outcome of this visit of Jesus.

The point in the lesson is easy to miss altogether;

The persistent human habit is to trace the analogies between the workings of nature and those of grace. In this instance, however, Christ is showing how oppositely to what we call nature the Spirit works in the realm of grace. It is true as concerns the natural harvest that a period of months must elapse between seedtime and harvest, and so there is a maxim, "yet four months and then cometh harvest." The farmer must expect delay in the practical process of gathering his grain; but Christ here is teaching that this need not be the case at all in the matter of winning souls to Himself, and so He speaks a word most surprising, "Behold, I say unto you, look on the fields that they are white already unto harvest." This is so although there has apparently been no seed-sowing at all, nor time for it. The whiteness, of course, was invisible to all eyes but His. But He shortly proved the ripeness by actually garnering the crop. What was it that so whitened those fields? What sort of prescience caught the vision of Christ to which the disciples were blind?

It is not enough to say that Christ was divine, and anything was possible where He was. This was not a miracle strictly speaking, nor did Christ work arbitrarily for the mere sake of showing His power; and yet His presence on the scene brought the sudden change. We may be confident He wrought the result on principles perfectly consonant with the normal ac-

tivities of His followers. He meant His achievement to be an object lesson to them, and the inference to be drawn from it is plain that the disciples of Christ also by the Spirit of God may often bring about just such sudden and wide-spread changes in the life of communities, if in themselves they are right towards God and their fellows. Fields are still white, ever white, on many sides in Christendom, and in pagandom also, if only Christ in the person of His workers is there with the anointed eye to see the golden grain.

Reading between the lines of this remarkable narrative, we may discern certain clear principles on which that revival was wrought, principles on which other revivals also may be expected to occur, however discouraging the conditions appear.

In an important sense Christ brought that revival with Him; and just as truly we must bring the revival to the communities in which we labour. This was not a case in which a reaper happened along "in the nick of time," to save the grain ready of itself to fall into the hand. This coming of the Reaper in the precise way He did, itself yellowed the corn and filled the granary. There are laws higher than natural which control the spiritual seasons. To the King in this realm, October or May in the process of the spiritual suns was alike productive. In large measure may it not be so likewise in our case?

Note some of the principles at the root of this

Samaritan revival which are as applicable to us now as to Jesus then :

(*a*) The Divine Reaper found His supreme satisfaction—His very food—in the accomplishment of the task on which His Father sent Him. He was therefore one through whom on a plane quite above the natural and apparent, His Father could pour all the energy of His grain-producing power. Working in perfect consistency with the All-Holy, the harvesting order of the world was at its maximum. With us the delays in spiritual harvest are often due to our own spiritual immaturity : we wait not only "four months," but long years, and no fruit matures. Perhaps we ourselves would be injured by the gratification of our untimely desires, and we are in no normal relation to the spiritual renewal of our fellows. In case spiritual children were born to us, the requisite moral warmth to nurse and rear them is lacking : but as for Jesus at the well, the passion of His soul went out after the perishing about Him. Hungry though He was, so that His disciples needed to go and buy food, yet He famished unspeakably more for the will of God to be accomplished in Sychar's villagers, and when He saw one soul transformed into a potential messenger of His Father's grace, His Spirit was instantly braced to new vigour. His disciples arriving with the food, perceiving that He was already so refreshed, asked "Hath any man brought Him aught to

eat?" He had really banqueted on viands all invisible to them. His meat was "to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to accomplish His work"—a meat so deeply satisfying that He said, "ye know not of" it. Not yet were the disciples soul-winners; they were without capacity for so high a task. They were mere partisans in a religious camp ready to break a lance with their rivals, rather than to share with them the Father's grace. The state of the Master's will respecting His Father's purpose for Him made all the difference.

(*b*) Then this Master Reaper established a friendly relation to the woman He met. He found the right point of contact: He was humanly as well as divinely wise: He used that most uncommon thing—common sense—in relation to another spirit: He did one of the most effective things possible for overcoming aversion; He asked a favour. "Give me to drink." Could anything be simpler or more pleasing than handing a cup of cold water to a way-worn traveller? Thus the key to the woman's heart was won.

(*c*) Jesus also disappointed prevailing prejudice. What tact there was in the simple favour asked: He who begged to drink is a Jew, and she who is asked to give it, a Samaritan. She wonders with great surprise at the unwonted simplicity. He meant she should. He disarms her suspicion, using the very method which shall shortly move her even against

her fears, to request grace from Him. His method won her to make the plea.

In our late Civil War, an earnest chaplain one day after a battle came upon a poor wounded soldier, prostrate on the field, apparently dying. The chaplain knelt beside him and asked:

"My dear fellow, would you like to have me read the Bible to you?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the soldier, "I am scorched with thirst."

The chaplain ran to the nearest spring and returned with abundant water; the man drank with desperation, and then he added:

"My wound is oozing so that it has saturated my clothing, until it sticks to my body."

The chaplain removed the stained garments, bathed the wound, and then took off his own shirt and put it on the suffering man, and remarked:

"Now my dear fellow, I hope you feel better."

The soldier looked up and replied: "Oh, so much better, and now if you have any book that tells a man to act like that, you can read it to me."

(*d*) Christ sought for the particle of faith there was in the woman, and when found built upon it. The woman had let drop a suggestion for which the Saviour was alert: "Art thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Here was the-

ology enough for the present need. "She is a believer in the patriarch Jacob," mused Christ: "there is faith in the embryo. Starting from that I'll lead her to Myself, the well deeper and diviner than all wells of the patriarchs."

(*e*) Jesus developed the woman's spiritual thirst: He so testified of the indwelling spring of life that the woman craved a draught from it:

"Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."

Emerson somewhere says that human nature is slow to believe that another has a finer power of spiritual discrimination than one's self; the moment, however, that one is convinced of it, that moment the soul's expectation of the other becomes boundless. Thus this woman could not withhold the expression of her spiritual thirst the moment she was convinced she had met the Master of the soul.

(*f*) Christ awoke in the woman conviction for sin, and yet how delicately! Ere one can taste the water of life, sin must be acknowledged. So Jesus says:

"Go call thy husband and come hither." The hint was enough.

"I have no husband."

"Jesus saith unto her, thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly."

To this searching insight, one answer was inevitable.

"The woman saith unto him, Sir I perceive that thou art a prophet. Thou readest my life like an open book, perhaps thou hast pardon and cleansing for me—a grace to offer."

And now the woman moralizes respecting worship and its sacred places: she becomes religious, which affords the Master the opportunity for declaring the essence of true religion, namely the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth.

(*g*) But Jesus also had with Him that day the full answer to the ultimate religious need: He brought her the present Messiah—the Saviour. Led on from point to point, at length the woman in the outburst of her final longing said, "I know that Messiah cometh (He that is called Christ): when He is come He will declare unto us all things." This seemed to say, "the Messiah, will He ever come, the hope of Samaritan as well as Jew? Oh, that He were here now, then should I know all I now lack."

This outreach of hope of the stricken, convicted woman, Jesus laid hold of and said to her plainly, "that Messiah is here now; I that speak unto thee am He."

We indeed cannot say, "I am He the Messiah"; but we can say, "He whom I know as the Messiah is here in my heart and near to you." The sinful world

thinks of God as afar off, even infinitely distant. Sin itself in us falsifies the situation; but the exact opposite is the fact, and it is the disciple's business to deny the last lie of Satan. God is not afar off, nor does any one need to retrace all the weary steps of his life-wandering to get back to God; he has simply to right-about-face, say, "Father I have sinned," and God is there:

> "Closer is He than breathing,
> Nearer than hands and feet."

(*h*) Jesus appreciated the previous seed-sowing of others and utilized it. He explained the suddenness of this revival in part by saying to the disciples:— "I sent you to reap that whereon ye have not laboured: others have laboured and ye have entered into their labour." He knew that however errant from the Jewish faith the Samaritans were, they possessed a certain amount of light; they had a historic version of the Pentateuch; they were worshippers, albeit their temple was on Gerizim and not Moriah; they cherished hope of the Messiah. By whomsoever these seeds were sown they were seeds of truth and pregnant with harvest to one who had the insight to discern it. He did not have to wait to undo all the errors of the semi-heathen community to reap some fruit. He thrust in the sickle at once. It is for the lack of discernment of this principle

that many modern ministers and missionaries put farther off from them than they need the day of harvest. To a degree indeed, all are seed-sowers, but their seeding may be largely reaped by others. The wise harvester presumes that other workers have been before him; that the seed somehow lives because God is watching over it, and he proceeds to harvest. One of the most effective evangelists I ever knew was a man who, while others were wont to say of him, he was "no preacher," nevertheless had the humility and the sense to say, "It is my business to presume upon the good preaching that long has been done before me. I get men to act on that." And act they did, as I personally observed in an important western city, until about 3,000 converts were enrolled in the various churches of the city, many of whose pastors had at first disparaged the skill of the reaper. If it is true that some who are ever learning never come to the knowledge of the truth, it is also true that some who are ever preaching lead few or none into personal salvation. It is largely from failure to make the most of the work of their predecessors.

Perhaps the human qualifications in Jesus were all summed up in this: *He was the living truth.*

Christian worker, young minister, novice on the foreign field, seek then first to come into close, gracious relation to even one poor soul waiting by

the wayside for a spiritual guide. And as this woman at Sychar in the new elation of the discovery of the Christ, forgot her water-pot and went away to the city with the sense of a brimming spring within her, and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did—can this be the Christ?" again others will believe, not merely because of the saying of the new herald, but they will come to Christ Himself first-hand, and shortly testify, "we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

A revival is something which in form or effect, no one can possibly foresee. It has in it always an element of surprise: it is Christ's "behold, I say unto you look on the fields,—the fields you thought blasted, black with death—but they are really white to harvest, whitened while you look, contrary to all you believe or expect, God's own original and strange wonder. Then against all odds, believe in the revival as possible and sudden anywhere, have it within you complete in your own personality, carry it with you wherever you go, as Jesus the Master did, and ere you are aware again and again the angels will strike up with you the song of HARVEST HOME.

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